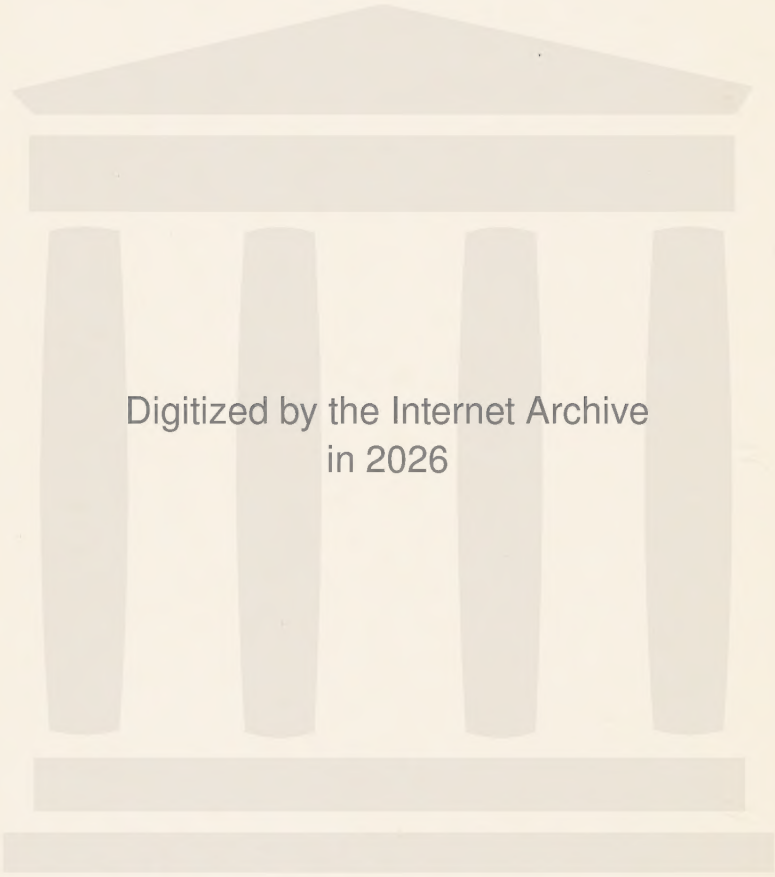
STORIES OF THE KINGS

EVANS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"LO, I SEE FOUR MEN LOOSE, WALKING IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRE"

Stories of the Kings

KING DAVID

Stories of the Kings

From David to Christ

By
MRS. ADELAIDE BEE EVANS

REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
TAKOMA PARK, WASHINGTON, D. C.
SOUTH BEND IND. -:- -:- -:- PEEKSKILL, N. Y.
PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

E. NORMAND, ARTIST

DAVID PLAYING THE HARP FOR KING SAUL

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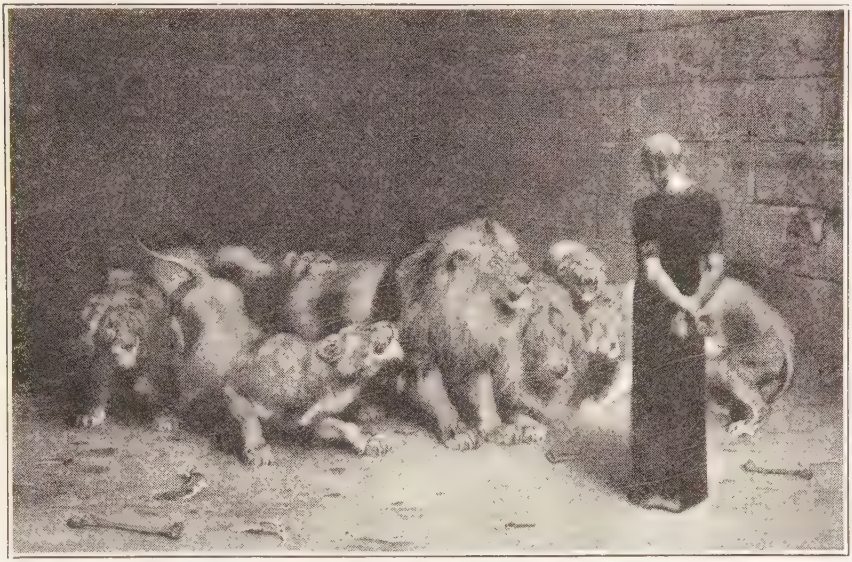
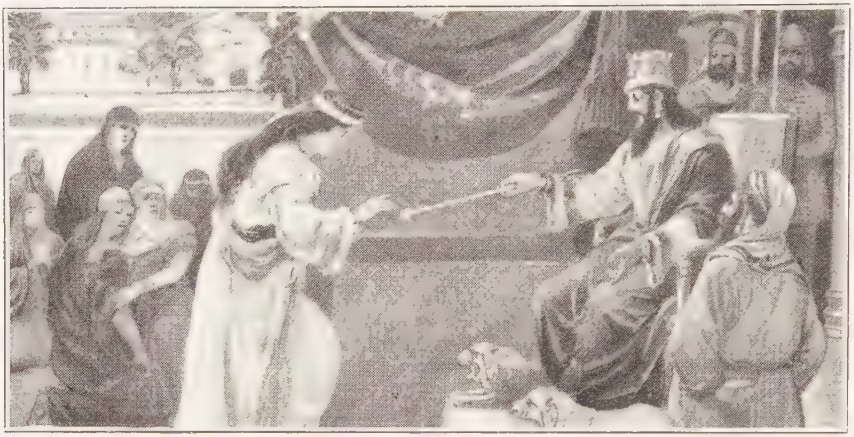


TABER PRANG B. RIVIERE, ARTIST

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

To the Children
Everywhere



QUEEN ESTHER

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H. COPPING, ARTIST

DAVID THE SHEPHERD

The Story of David

IN the days when Saul was king of Is'ra-el, there lived in Beth'le-hem of Ju-de'a a shepherd boy whose name was David. He was the youngest son of his father, Jesse; and he was brave and noble. His heart was pure, and his mind was full of beau'ti-ful and happy thoughts about the love and care of his heav'en-ly Father. These he often put in words, and set to music. In the Bible we find many of these songs, or psalms, that David wrote.

While David was still caring for his father's sheep, the Lord spoke to the aged prophet Sam'u-el, and said: "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have re-ject'ed him from reigning over Is'ra-el? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth'le-hem-ite: for I have pro-vi'ded me a king among his sons.

"And Sam'u-el did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth'le-hem. And he sanc'-

DAVID, THE SON OF JESSE, SE-LECT'ED BY SAM'U-EL TO BE KING

ti-fied Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sac'ri-fice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on E-li'ab, and said, Surely the Lord's a-noint'ed is before him.

"But the Lord said unto Sam'u-el, Look not on his coun'te-nance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward ap-pear'ance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

Then Jesse called his other sons, one by one; but each time Sam'u-el said, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this."

So seven of the sons of Jesse passed before Sam'-u-el. When he had seen them all, the prophet said, "The Lord hath not chosen these."

"And Sam'u-el said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children?

"And he said, There re-main'eth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep.

"And Sam'u-el said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

"And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beau'ti-ful coun'te-nance, and goodly to look to.

"And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Sam'u-el took the horn of oil, and a-noint'ed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

Sam'u-el then went back to his home in Ramah, and David returned to the hills to care for his sheep. Day by day he did his

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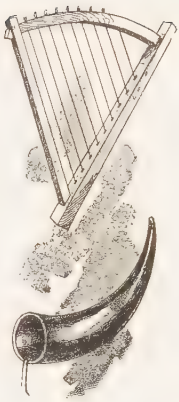
TILLACK, ARTIST

DAVID PLAYING THE HARP BEFORE SAUL

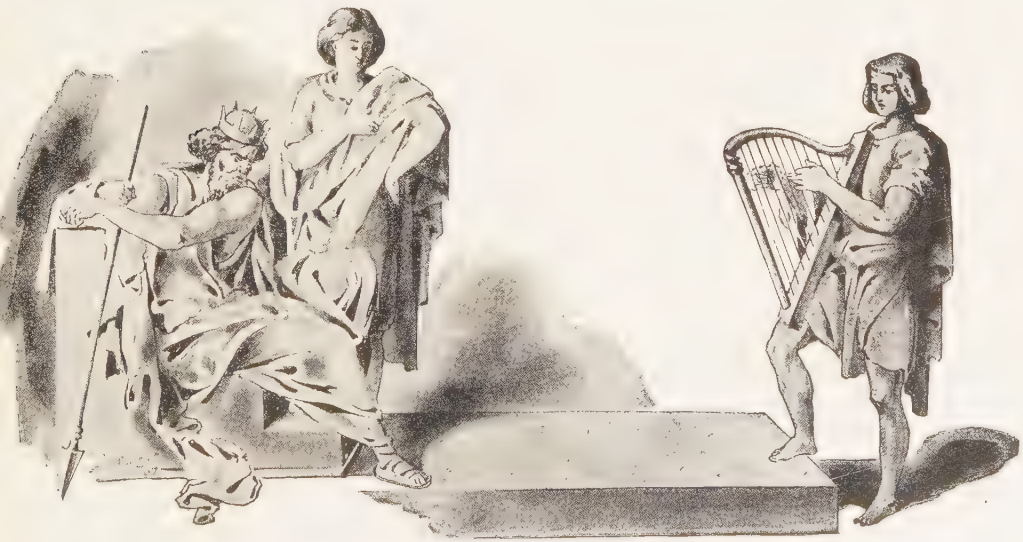


work faith'ful-ly; and as he worked, he thought about God, whose love he felt in his own heart. But while David's life was peaceful and happy, King Saul grew each day more gloomy and sad; for God's Spirit was taken away from him, and an evil spirit troubled him.

The men of the court did all they could to please Saul, but they could not help him. At last his servants advised that a man be found who could play well on a harp. "It shall come to pass," they said, "when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well."

This pleased Saul, and he said, "Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me."

One of the king's servants had seen David, and had heard the sweet music of his harp. "I have seen a son of Jesse," said this man, "that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him."



So Saul sent for David, and as often as the evil spirit troubled him, David played on his harp. As Saul listened, he "was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

When the king did not need David, the young man went back to his quiet home, and led his flock among the hills, and played his harp to the praise of God.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

By and by the Phi-lis'tines brought their armies to fight against Is'ra-el. Saul gathered all his soldiers, too, but they were few compared to the Phi-lis'tines. The camp of Is'ra-el was on a mountain on one side of a narrow valley, and the camp of the Phi-lis'tines was on a mountain on the other side.

Now the Phi-lis'tines had with them a giant named Go-li'ath. He was about ten feet high, and so fierce and strong that every one feared him. But though he was so strong, Go-li'ath seems to have had a coward's heart; at least he took great care to protect himself. On his head he wore a helmet of brass; a coat of mail covered his body, with an extra piece of brass fastened between the shoulders; on his legs were also pieces of brass, and a man bearing a shield walked before him. His spear was very large and heavy.

Every day this great giant, with the sun shining on his bright armor, would stride down into the valley, where the men of Is'ra-el could see him. Then he would call to them, and taunt them. "Am not I a Phi-lis'tine," he said, "and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us."

No one answered Go-li'ath, and he became yet bolder, and said: "I defy the armies of Is'ra-el this day; give me a man, that we may fight to-geth'er."

Instead of trusting in the Lord, and asking his help, Saul and all Is'ra-el "were dismayed, and greatly afraid" when they heard the giant's words.

David's three eldest brothers were in Saul's army; and one day Jesse called David in from his flocks, and said: "Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare."

So David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a servant, and went to Saul's camp. When he came to the place, the two armies were ready to go out to fight; already the men were shouting for the battle.

Leaving the things he had brought with a man to care for, David ran into the army to find

his brothers. As he was talking with them, Go-li'ath came down into the valley, and defied the army of Is'-ra-el, and asked for a man to come and fight with him. "And all the men of Is'ra-el, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid."

Some of the soldiers were talking to-geth'er. They said that King Saul had promised to give his daughter in marriage to any man who would kill this giant. Also he would make him very rich. David heard the men talking, and asked them to tell him what would be done for the man who would kill the Phi-lis'tine, and take "away the reproach from Is'ra-el."

When E-li'ab, David's eldest brother, heard this question, he knew what David was thinking of doing, and was very angry.

"Why camest thou down hither?" he asked; "and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wil'-der-ness? I know thy pride, and the naugh'ti-ness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou might-est see the battle."

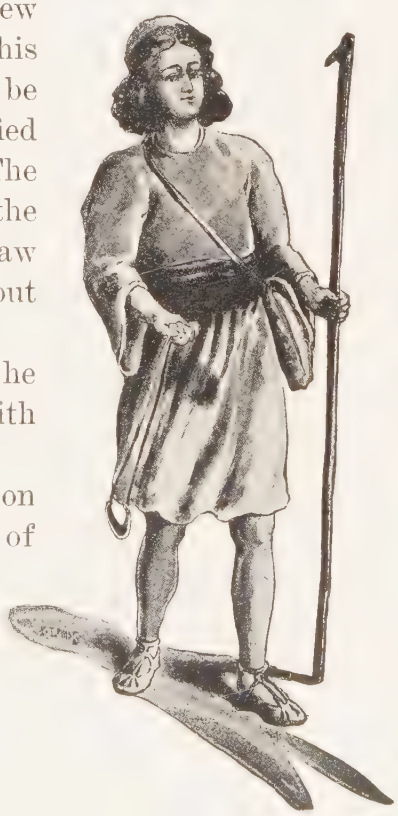
David was not angered by these unkind words. He answered bravely, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

"And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him. And David said to Saul,

Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Phi-lis'tine."

Saul was as-ton'ished when he heard these brave words. "Thou art not able to go against this Phi-lis'tine," he said; "for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war."

But David was not afraid. "Thy servant kept his father's sheep," he said, "and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and de-liv'ered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this un-cir'cum-cised Phi-lis'tine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord that de-liv'ered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will de-liv'er me out of the hand of this Phi-lis'tine."



When Saul heard these words, he said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

Saul bade his servants put upon David his own armor,—a helmet of brass, a coat of mail, and the king's own sword. But when David had gone a little way, he

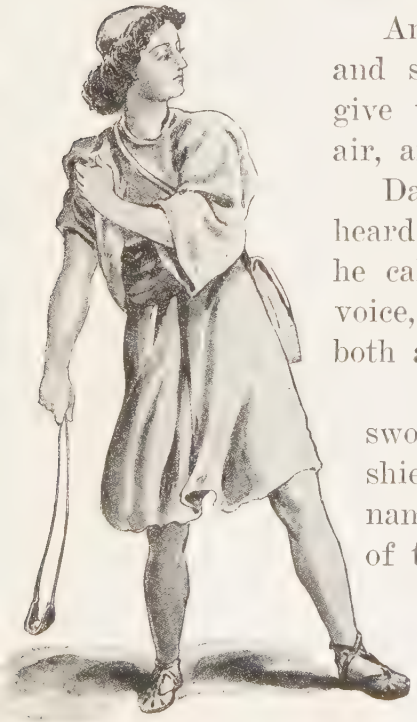
MADAME BOUQUEREAU, ARTIST

DAVID RESCUES THE LAMB FROM THE LION

came back, and said, "I can not go with these; for I have not proved them."

So David un-fast'ened the king's sword, and took off the royal armor, and again started forth to meet the giant. "And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand."

With these simple weapons, which he had "proved," and knew how to use, and with a firm trust in the God of his fathers, David "drew near to the Phi-lis'tine." At the same time Go-li'ath, all in shining armor, and with his shield-bear'er walking before him, came striding down the valley to meet David. But when the giant came nearer, and saw that David was only a youth, with a shepherd's staff in his hand, he despised him, and said: "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

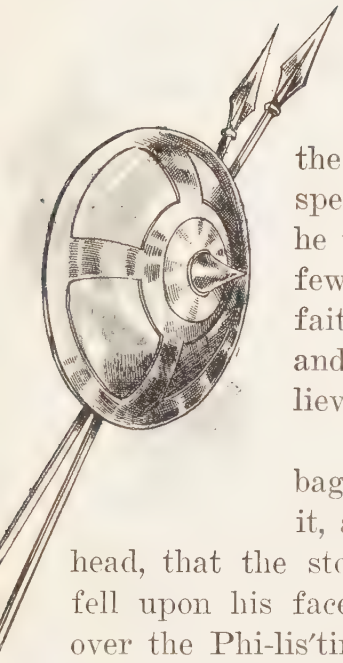


And the Phi-lis'tine cursed David, and said: "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

David did not run away when he heard these taunting words. Instead, he called to Go-li'ath in a loud, clear voice, that could be plainly heard by both armies, saying: —

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Is'ra-el, whom thou

GO-LI′ATH DE-FY′ING DAVID AND THE ARMIES OF IS′RA-EL



hast defied. This day will the Lord de-liv'er thee into mine hand. And all this as-sem'bly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." How few young men have as clear and sure a faith as had David, and are so ready and willing to proclaim it to un-be-liev'ers!

"And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Phi-lis'tine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Phi-lis'tine."

And "David ran, and stood upon the Phi-lis'tine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith.

"And when the Phi-lis'tines saw their champion was dead, they fled." The army of Is'ra-el, shouting and singing, pursued their en'e-mies, even into their own cities. Many of the Phi-lis'tines were killed as they fled.

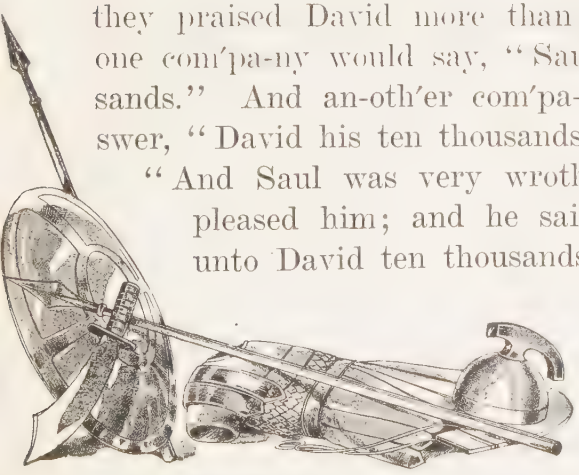
As David came into the city, with the head of the giant in his hand, Abner, the captain of Saul's army, met him, and took him to the king. For a little while Saul was pleased with David; and he took the

DAVID WITH HIS SLING MEETS GO-LI′ATH IN BATTLE

young man to be with him, and would not let him go back to his father's house. Jon'a-than, the king's son, loved David, and promised always to be kind to him. He took off his beau'ti-ful robe, and gave it to David, to show his love. Jon'a-than also gave David his gar'-ments, and his own sword and bow. David was not made proud or vain by all these honors. He faith'ful-ly obeyed all the commands of King Saul, and behaved himself so wisely that Saul set him over his men of war.

But Saul's kindness to David lasted only a brief time. After the battle with the Phi-lis'tines, as Saul and David were passing to-geth'er through some of the cities of Is'ra-el, the women came out, singing, and dancing, and playing on in'stru-ments of music, to meet them, and praise them for their vic'to-ry. But they praised David more than Saul. As they sang, one com'pa-ny would say, "Saul hath slain his thousands." And an-oth'er com'pa-ny would sing, in answer, "David his ten thousands."

"And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands:



R. P. REID, ARTIST

THE LAST MEETING OF DAVID AND JON'A-THAN

and what can he have more but the kingdom?" Saul soon came to hate David so much that he would have killed him if he had dared. This he feared to do o'pen-ly, so he planned to send David against the Phi-lis'tines, hoping they would kill him in battle. One day Saul called David to him, and said he would give him his eldest daughter to be his wife, if he would be valiant for him, and fight the Lord's battles.

David did not have to be hired to do his duty. He was be-gin'ning to un-der-stand' Saul's real feeling toward him, too, so he answered: "Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's fam'i-ly in Is'ra-el, that I should be son'in-law to the king?"

Yet David did all that the king asked. But when the time came for Saul to give his daughter to be David's wife, the king gave her to some one else.

Now Saul had an-oth'er daughter, Michal, who loved David; and when the king heard of it, he told David that if he would destroy a hundred Phi-lis'tines, he would give him Michal to be his wife. This the king said because he again hoped that the Phi-lis'tines would kill David.

But the Lord was with David, and gave him the vic'to-ry over his en'e-mies. When he came back from the battle, he was made the king's son'in-law. Yet Saul, when he saw the success that the Lord gave to

David, hated him still more, and became his bitter en′e-my.

At last the evil spirit of hatred grew so strong in Saul's heart that he de-ter′mined to kill David. But Jon′a-than, David's true friend, warned him of the king's purpose, and he fled.

For many years Saul sought David's life, hunting him with his soldiers from one hi′ding-place to an-oth′er, as men hunt wild and dan′ger-ous an′i-mals. In gloomy caves and dens, in the dark forest and the lonely wil′der-ness, even in the cities of the en′e-mies of Is′ra-el, David found a refuge. He was often be-trayed, and again and again his life was in danger; but God's angels never left him, and in all these dark years the Lord was teaching David lessons of patience and trust and meekness.

At one time when David's life was in danger every day, Jon′a-than vis′it-ed him in a wood. How it must have cheered and en-cour′aged David to listen to the

words of hope and love and courage spoken by his true friend, the prince!

"Fear not," said Jon'a-than to David; "for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Is'ra-el."

"And they two made a cov'e-nant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jon'a-than went to his house."

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

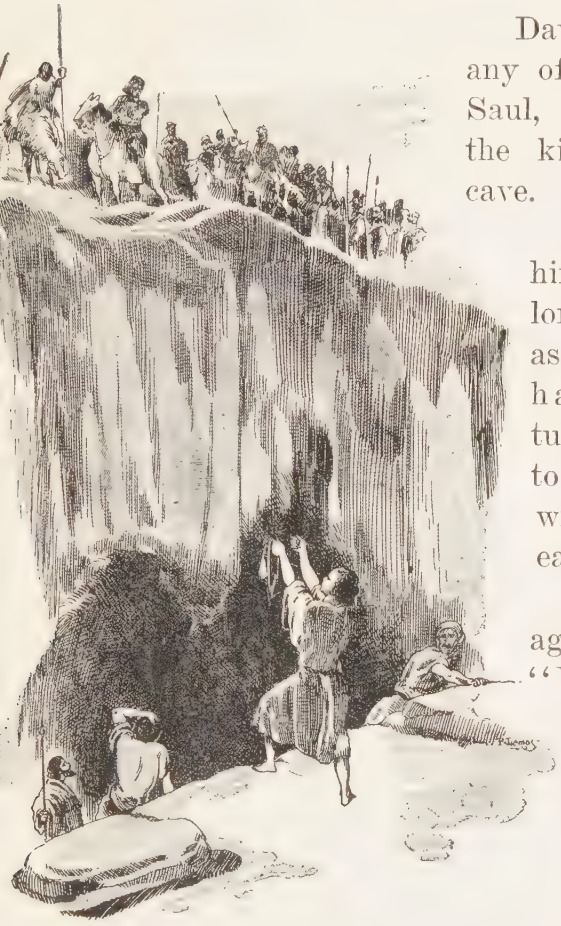
One time Saul heard where David was hiding in a wil'der-ness, and he "took three thousand chosen men out of all Is'ra-el, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats." Three thousand soldiers searching for one man! But David was safe; for the angels of the Lord pro-tect'ed him and hid him from the sight of Saul's soldiers.

One day Saul went into a cave where David and his men were hidden. Saul could not see David, as he walked into the cave. The men who were with David said the time had now come for him to kill Saul. But David would not harm the king. He was willing to obey and serve him, because he was still "the Lord's a-noint'ed."

While Saul was in the cave, David came up behind him, and cut off the skirt of his robe, but Saul did not know it. Even for this David was sorry. "David's heart smote him," the Bible says, "because he had cut off Saul's skirt."

"The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's a-noint'ed," said David to his men, "to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the a-noint'ed of the Lord."

DAVID WITH HIS MEN IN THE CAVE CUTTING OFF A PIECE OF THE GARMENT OF KING SAUL



David would not allow any of his servants to hurt Saul, and in a little while the king went out of the cave.

Then David followed him, and called, "My lord the king." How as-ton'ished Saul must have been when he turned and looked back, to see David stooping, with his face to the earth!

Then David spoke again to Saul, saying: "Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had de-liv'ered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's a-noint'ed."

David also held up the skirt of Saul's robe, and told him that if he had wished to do him harm, he might have killed him when he cut it off. David had only kind words for the man who had hunted him so long to take his life; he even called him "my father," to

show that in all that was right, he was willing to serve and obey him.

"And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David?

"And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast re-ward'ed me good, whereas I have re-ward'ed thee evil." "Wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

"And now, behold," said Saul, "I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Is'-ra-el shall be es-tab'lished in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house."

DAVID TAKING SAUL'S SPEAR AND CRUSE OF WATER

David promised all that Saul asked. Then the king took his soldiers and went away; but David still stayed in the wil′der-ness; for he had learned not to trust Saul.

An-oth′er time when Saul sought David, to take his life, David and one of his friends went into Saul's camp while he was asleep. All the watchmen were asleep, too, and David might have taken his en′e-my's life. But he would not harm the king. Taking only Saul's spear, and a cruse of water from his side, he went qui′et-ly away.

"Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them: and David cried to the people, and to Abner," the captain of Saul's soldiers, saying, "An′swer-est thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?"

"Art not thou a valiant man?" called David to Abner; "who is like to thee in Is′ra-el? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? Now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

"And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son

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DAVID AGAIN SPARES SAUL'S LIFE.

David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king."

Then David asked Saul why he still came out against him, to seek his life, as one would hunt a partridge in the mountains. "What have I done?" asked David, "or what evil is in mine hand?"

Saul's heart was touched when he heard these words, and knew that David had again spared his life.

"I have sinned," said Saul: "return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred ex-ceed'ing-ly."

But David only answered: "Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it."

Then Saul said to David: "Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail."

After this Saul and his soldiers went away, and David found a refuge in one of the cities of the Phi-lis'tines.

By and by the Phi-lis'tines gathered a large army, and went to make war against Saul. In the battle that followed, Jon'a-than was slain, with two of Saul's other sons. "And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded."

Then Saul fell upon his own sword and died.

When David heard the news of the battle, and that Jon'a-than, his loyal friend, and Saul, the Lord's a-noint'ed, were dead, he "took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him: and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until

THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JON'A-THAN

even, for Saul, and for Jon'a-than his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Is'ra-el."

DAVID TAKES THE THRONE OF ISRAEL

When the days of mourning for Saul were over, David went to Hebron, and was there a-noint'ed king by the men of Judah. One of Saul's sons was king over the other tribes for a few years; but fi'nal-ly these tribes also made David their king.

David chose Je-ru'sa-lem, a strong city not far from Hebron, to be the cap'i-tal of his kingdom, and called it by his own name,—"The City of David." It was built upon a number of high hills, and aft'er-ward became the chief city of all Is'ra-el.

Hiram, king of Tyre, was David's friend, and he sent mes'sen-gers to David, and cedar logs and car'penters and masons, and they built for David a beau'ti-ful house in Je-ru'sa-lem.

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his en'e-mies; that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." In David's heart was a desire to build a house for the ark and for the worship of the Lord.

Nathan was pleased because the king wished to build a house for the ark of God. "Go, do all that is in thine heart," said Nathan; "for the Lord is with thee."

But that night the Lord spoke to Nathan, and said that he should tell David not to build the house. David had been a man of war, and there were yet many battles to be fought before the en'e-mies of Is'ra-el would all

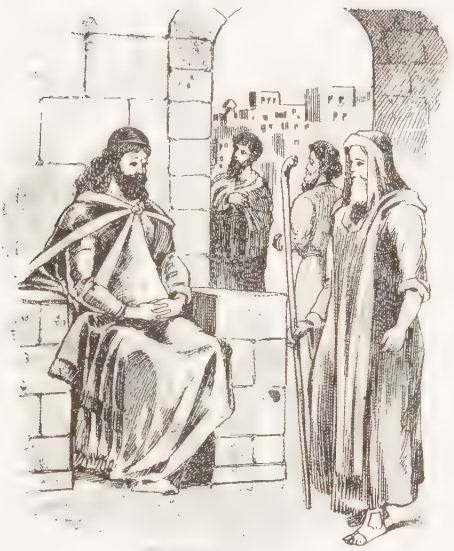
ABSA-LOM STEALS AWAY THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE

be driven away. When David's son was king, he should build the house of the Lord in a time of peace. So David did not build the house, but he gathered wood, and gold, and silver, and precious stones, and saved them for the time when the house should be built. When-ev'er he gained a vic'to-ry over his en'e-mies, he saved the gold and silver and brass, and gave it to the Lord.

DAVID AND ABSALOM

David had many sons. One of them, Ab'sa-lom, was the most beau'ti-ful young man in the kingdom. "In all Is'ra-el there was none to be so much praised as Ab'sa-lom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him."

But Ab'sa-lom was proud of his beauty; he was selfish, and quick-tem'pered, and de-ceit'ful, and un-for-giv'ing. When David was old, Ab'sa-lom made ready for himself fine horses and gilded char'i-ots, and chose fifty men to run before him. Every day he rode through the city, the fifty soldiers going before to clear the way, the beau'ti-ful horses dancing and prancing, the sun shining on his char'i-ot, and Ab'sa-lom himself bowing and smiling to the people as he passed. This he did so that every one would think him a great man.



Ab'sa-lom did more than this. Very early in the morning, when the farmers and shepherds came to market, he stood by the gate of the city, where all could see him. When any one came into the city who had a favor to ask of the king, Ab'sa-lom called him, and asked him from what city he came.

If the man answered, "Thy servant is one of the tribes of Is'ra-el," Ab'sa-lom would listen to his story, and would pretend to be very sorry for his trouble. "Thy matters are good and right," he would say; "but there is no man de-pu'ted of the king to hear thee."

Of course the man would begin to wish that this handsome, kind-ap-pear'ing man was king instead of David. Then Ab'sa-lom would exclaim, "O that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"

When any man came near Ab'sa-lom, to bow down before him because he was the king's son, Ab'sa-lom reached out his hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him. In this way he deceived the people, and made them think that he was their friend. The Bible says that "Ab'sa-lom stole the hearts of the men of Is'ra-el."

By and by Ab'sa-lom was made king by some of the people, and David and his friends had to flee from Je-ru'sa-lem.

"And David went up by the ascent of Mount Ol'i-vet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up."

Ab'sa-lom not only took the throne, but he gathered an army and followed David to kill him. A battle was fought in a wood between this army and David's servants. Before his men left him to go to this battle, David gave his chief captains this touching command in the hearing of all the people: "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Ab'sa-lom."

"And Ab'sa-lom met the servants of David. And Ab'sa-lom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Ab'sa-lom hanged in an oak.

"And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite

DAVID MOURNS FOR AB'SA-LOM

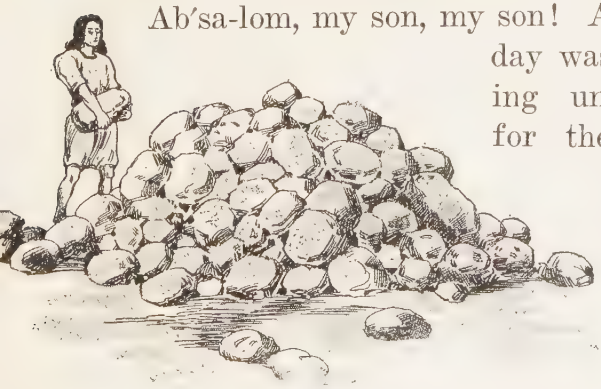
him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.

"And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and A-bish'a-i and It'ta-i, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Ab'sa-lom."

But Joab, instead of o-bey'ing the command of the king, "took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Ab'sa-lom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Ab'sa-lom, and slew him.

"And they took Ab'sa-lom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him."

All this time David sat in the gate of the city, waiting for tidings of the battle. His first question to the mes'sen-gers who came to the city was, "Is the young man Ab'sa-lom safe?" When he learned that Ab'sa-lom was dead, "the king was much moved, and went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he wept, thus he said, O my son Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son Ab'sa-lom! would God I had died for thee, O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son! And the vic'to-ry that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son."



DAVID INSTRUCTS SOL'O-MON CON-CERN'ING THE KINGDOM

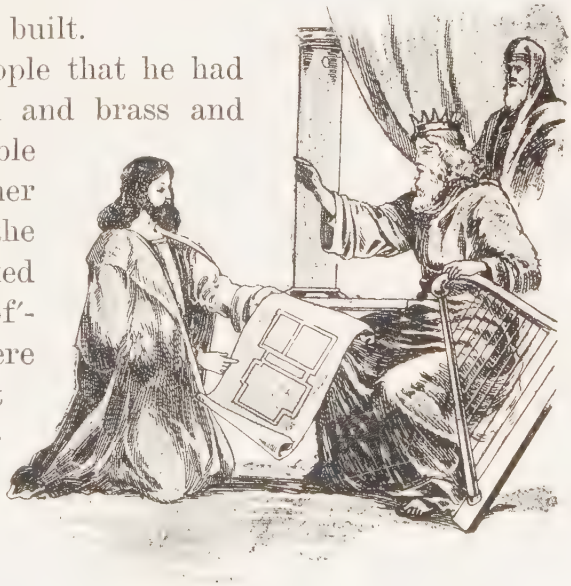
THE LAST DAYS OF DAVID

After the death of Ab'sa-lom, David went back to Je-ru'sa-lem. The Lord was with him, and gave him vic'to-ry over his en'e-mies. When he became an old man, and the time drew near that he must die, David called all the chief men of the nation to Je-ru'sa-lem. He told them that he had desired to build a house for the Lord; but God had said that his son Sol'-o-mon should build the house in a time of peace.

"And thou, Sol'o-mon my son," said David, "know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and un-der-stand'eth all the im-ag-i-na'tions of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for-ev'er. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanc'tu-ar-y: be strong, and do it."

Then David gave to Sol'o-mon the patterns, or plans, for the temple and all its fur'ni-ture; for the Lord had given David wisdom to know how the house should be built.

The king told the people that he had gathered silver and gold and brass and iron and wood, with marble and onyx and all manner of precious stones, for the Lord's house, and he asked them also to bring an of'-fer-ing. The people were glad to help in this great work; they offered will'-



DAVID'S VISION OF CHRIST SITTING UPON HIS THRONE

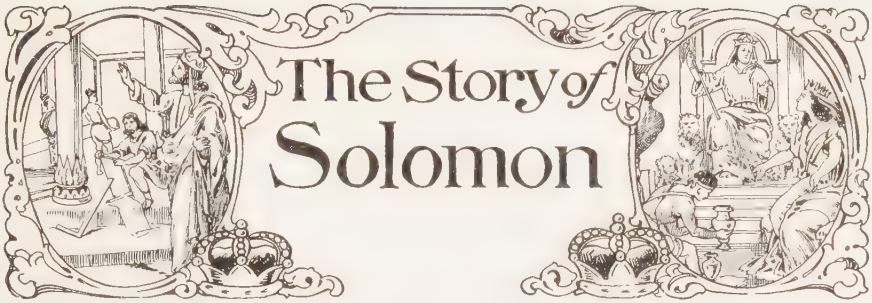
ing-ly, with praise and re-joi'cing. All this made David very happy.

David now had his son Sol'o-mon a-noint'ed king in his place; for he knew that an-oth'er son would try to take the kingdom, but the Lord had chosen Sol'o-mon to be king.

"Then Sol'o-mon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Is'ra-el obeyed him."

And "David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And the days that David reigned over Is'ra-el were forty years." "And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor: and Sol'o-mon his son reigned in his stead."

SOL'O-MON PROCLAIMED KING



The Story of Solomon

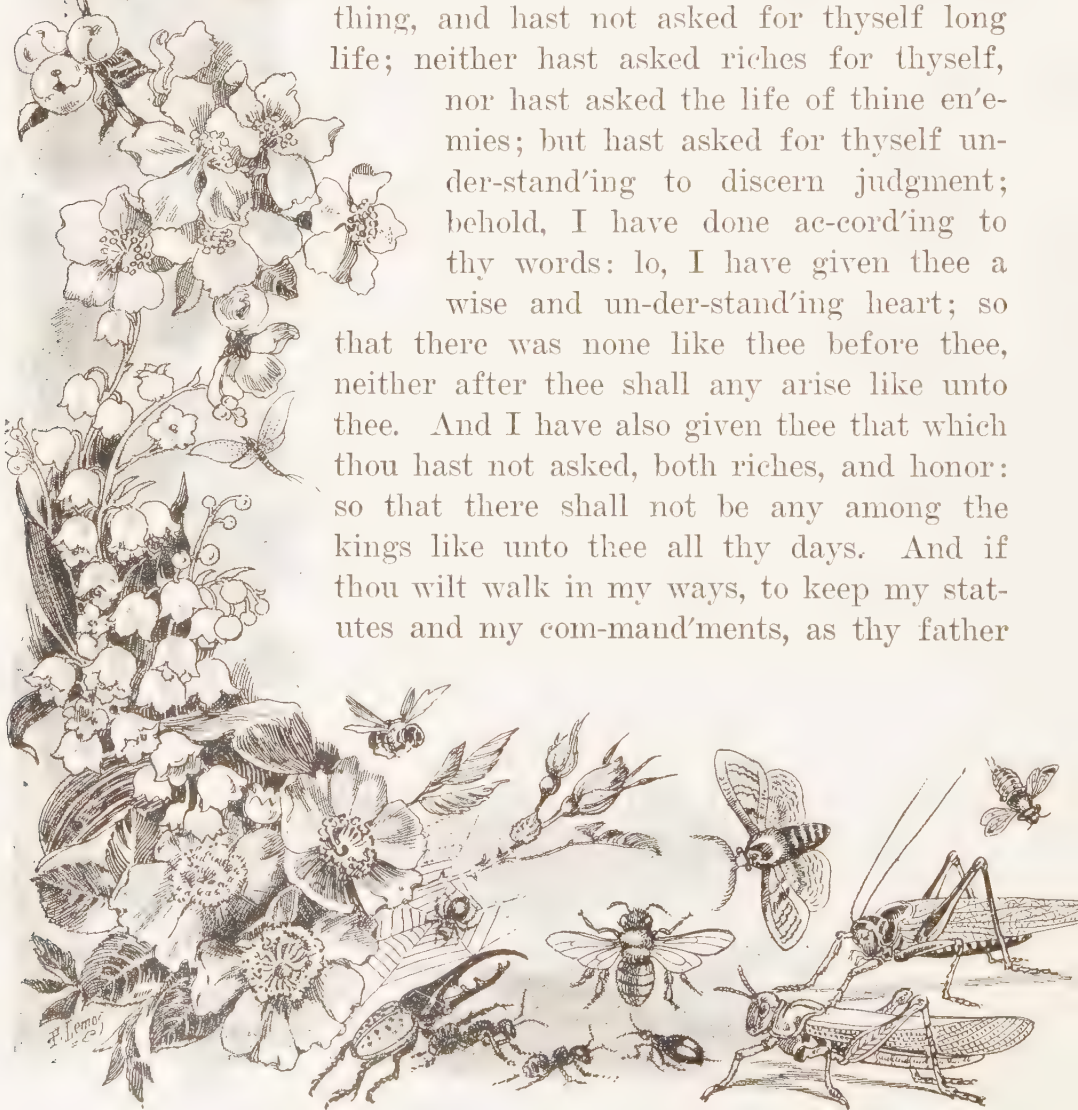
SOL'O-MON, the third king of Is'ra-el, was a young man when he took the kingdom. He "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father;" therefore he wanted to be a good king, and to rule the people wisely; but he knew that he could not do this unless God helped him.

The Lord knew the thoughts that troubled the young king; and one time when Sol'o-mon had offered many sac'ri-fi-ces in Gib'e-on, God appeared to him in a dream by night, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee."

Sol'o-mon's answer shows how truly he desired to do right in the great work before him. "Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy," he said, "ac-cord'ing as he walked before thee in truth, and in right'eous-ness, and in up'right-ness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that

can not be numbered nor counted for mul'ti-tude. Give therefore thy servant an un-der-stand'ing heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

"And the speech pleased the Lord, that Sol'o-mon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine en'e-mies; but hast asked for thyself un-der-stand'ing to discern judgment; behold, I have done ac-cord'ing to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and un-der-stand'ing heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my stat-utes and my com-mand'ments, as thy father

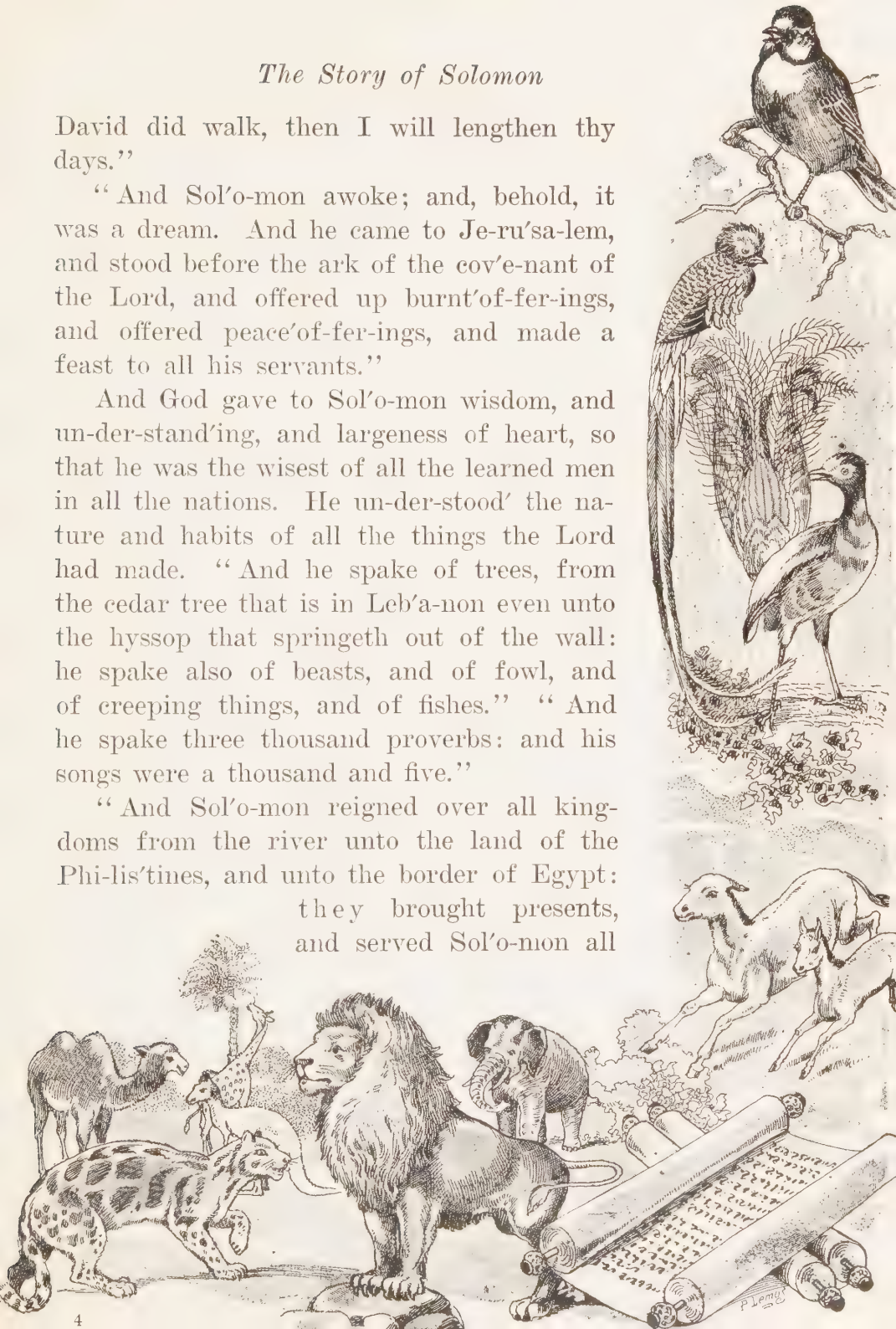


David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days."

"And Sol'o-mon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Je-ru'sa-lem, and stood before the ark of the cov'e-nant of the Lord, and offered up burnt'of-fer-ings, and offered peace'of-fer-ings, and made a feast to all his servants."

And God gave to Sol'o-mon wisdom, and un-der-stand'ing, and largeness of heart, so that he was the wisest of all the learned men in all the nations. He un-der-stood' the nature and habits of all the things the Lord had made. "And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Leb'a-non even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." "And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five."

"And Sol'o-mon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Phi-lis'tines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Sol'o-mon all



THE WISE JUDGMENT OF SOL'O-MON

the days of his life." "And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Sol'o-mon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom."

God also gave Sol'o-mon wisdom to decide justly when disputes were brought to him to settle.

One day two women came to Sol'o-mon, bringing a baby with them. One of the women said: O my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and each of us had a son. But this woman's child died in the night; and while I was asleep, she took my little babe, and left her dead child in my arms. And when I arose in the morning and looked, I saw it was not my child.

"And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son.

"And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son."

"And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other."

When she heard these words, the true mother of the child cried, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." But the other woman said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it."

Then the king said, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof."

"And all Is'ra-el heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

G. DORE, ARTIST

CEDARS OF LEB′A-NON FOR SOL′O-MON′S TEMPLE

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

Not long after Sol'o-mon was made king, he began to get things ready for building the temple. He called to-geth'er all the best workmen in his kingdom, and di-vi'ded them into com'panies, each to do a certain kind of work. Some hewed and smoothed and polished the great stones and timbers; others did clever carving, and em-broid'er-y for the veil of the temple; still others were skilful workers in gold and silver.

Hiram, king of Tyre, who had been David's friend, gave Sol'o-mon all the cedar trees and other choice woods that he needed; he also sent skilled men to help prepare the stones for the foun-da'tion of the temple. Besides these, he sent a man who could work in silver and gold and do beau'ti-ful carving, to teach and to help Sol'o-mon's workmen.

When all was ready, in the fourth year of his reign, Sol'o-mon began to build

the house of the Lord. Every part of it had been so well planned, every stone and timber was so care'ful-ly fitted, "that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."

It took seven years to build the temple. When it was finished, it was the most beau'ti-ful building in the whole earth. Within, it was o-ver-laid' with gold, and all its fur'ni-ture was of perfect gold. The carved doors were covered with gold and set with precious stones.

When the temple was finished, Sol'o-mon called the elders of Is'ra-el and all the chief of the people to-geth'er at Je-ru'sa-lem to offer sac'ri-fi-ces, and to ded'i-cate to God the house they had built for him. The Levites brought the ark, and put it in the most holy place of the temple. Then hundreds of well-trained singers and players, dressed in white robes, with cymbals and trumpets, praised the Lord, saying, "He is good; for his mercy en-dur'eth for-ev'er."

And "the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to min'is-ter by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

G. SOLOMON, ARTIST

THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

King Sol'o-mon stood on a high platform in the court of the temple. When the glory of God filled the house, the king blessed the people. Then he spread forth his hands toward heaven, and prayed ear'nest-ly, thanking God for his mercy and goodness to Is'ra-el, and asking him still to be with them. Sol'o-mon also prayed for those who should come from distant lands to worship in the temple.

"And the king, and all Is'ra-el with him, offered sac'ri-fice before the Lord. And Sol'o-mon offered a sac'ri-fice of peace'of-fer-ings, which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Is'ra-el ded'i-ca-ted the house of the Lord."

"And at that time Sol'o-mon held a feast, and all Is'ra-el with him," and on the eighth day he sent them away. "And they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Is'ra-el his people."

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

When Sol'o-mon had finished the temple, he built a beau'ti-ful palace for himself. He also built a great navy, and sent his ships to distant lands to bring back

THOMAS NAST, ARTIST

SOL'O-MON IN ALL HIS GLORY

silver and gold, horses and char'i-ots, fine linen, spices, i'vo-ry, and other precious things.

And the king made two hundred targets of beaten gold, and three hundred golden shields. All the drinking vessels of his house were of pure gold. "None were of silver: it was nothing ac-count'ed of in the days of Sol'o-mon." "More-o'ver the king made a great throne of i'vo-ry, and o-ver-laid' it with the best gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom."

All the world heard of the riches, greatness, and wisdom of King Sol'o-mon. "And all the earth sought to Sol'o-mon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his heart."

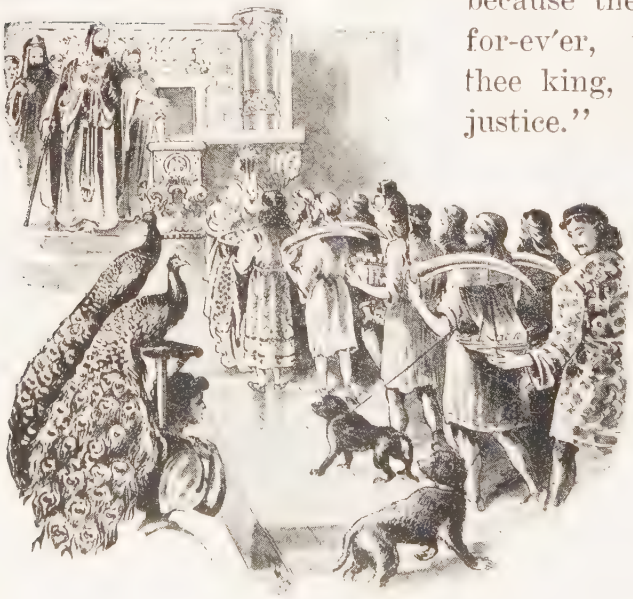
In a country far to the south lived the queen of Sheba. When she heard of the fame of Sol'o-mon, she de-ci'ded to go to Je-ru'sa-lem to visit him, and to "prove him with hard questions."

"And she came to Je-ru'sa-lem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones:

and when she was come to Sol'o-mon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Sol'o-mon told her all her questions: there was not an'y-thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

"And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Sol'o-mon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the at-tend'ance of his min'is-ters, and their ap-par'el, and his cup'bear-ers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. How-be'it I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and pros-per'i-ty ex-ceed'eth the fame which I heard.

"Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand con-tin'u-al-ly before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which de-light'ed in thee, to set thee on the throne of Is'ra-el: because the Lord loved Is'ra-el for-ev'er, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice." Before she went away, the queen of Sheba "gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones."



THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

"And King Sol'o-mon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, what-so-ev'er she asked, beside that which Sol'o-mon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants."

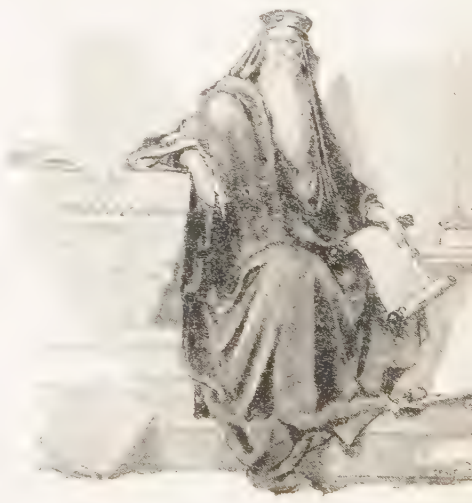
No doubt the queen was pleased with the gifts that this rich and wise king had bestowed upon her; but of far greater value was the knowledge of the true God which she carried back to her own people.

THE LAST DAYS OF SOLOMON

The reign of King Sol'o-mon did not end as glo'ri-ous-ly as it began. The Bible says that he "loved many strange women"—daughters of the heathen nations, whom the Lord had plainly for-bid'den his people to marry. He married many wives from the nations of the heathen. And "it came to pass, when Sol'o-mon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods."

All the nations had heard of Sol'o-mon, and of the house he had built for the worship of the true God. Now, when they learned that he had also built "high places" for the gods of the heathen, they thought the God of Is'ra-el was no more worthy of honor than the gods that they worshiped.

The Lord was displeased with Sol'o-mon because of this great sin. Twice he had spoken to him, warning him not to serve other gods.



"If ye shall at all turn from fol'-low-ing me, ye or your children, and will not keep my com-mand'ments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them," said the Lord, "then will I cut off Is'ra-el out of the land which I have given them; and Is'ra-el shall be a proverb and a byword among all people."

For many years the land had had rest from war; but now, in the closing years of Sol'o-mon's reign, the en'e-mies of Is'ra-el again began to vex and trouble them.

Before his death, too, Sol'o-mon knew that, because of his sins, the kingdom of Is'ra-el would be di-vi'ded when he should die; and one of his servants would be king over ten of the tribes.

"And the time that Sol'o-mon reigned in Je-ru'sa-lem over all Is'ra-el was forty years. And Sol'o-mon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father."

From the story of Sol'o-mon's life, we learn that God is pleased when his children ask him for wisdom to help them in their work. We also learn that, no matter how strong or rich or wise any one is, he is safe only so long as he obeys God's commands. The Lord had for-bid'den his people to as-so'ci-ate with the heathen, or to take them into their homes; for he knew that if they did this, they

RE-HO-BO′AM RE-FUS′ING THE COUNSEL OF THE OLD MEN

would be led to worship idols. Even Sol'o-mon, with all his wisdom and power, was led into sin because he chose for com-pan'ions those who did not love the true God.

THE KINGDOMS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

During the reign of King Sol'o-mon the people had to pay heavy taxes, and many of them were required to give their service to the king in tilling his fields, cul'ti-va-ting his beau'ti-ful gardens, and building and keeping up his fine pal'a-ces. Now when Sol'o-mon was dead, and the people were about to make his son Re-ho-bo'am king, they came to him and said: "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

"And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people de-part'ed.

"And King Re-ho-bo'am con-sult'ed with the old men, that stood before Sol'o-mon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for-ev'er."

But Re-ho-bo'am "forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and con-sult'ed with the young men that were grown up with him. And the young men that were grown up with him

KING RE-HO-BO'AM AND THE YOUNG MEN

spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scor'pi-ons."

So when the people came to Re-ho-bo'am on the third day, he answered them "roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scor'pi-ons."

The people of Is'ra-el were angry when they heard these cruel words. Ten of the tribes chose Jer-o-bo'am for their king; only the tribes of Judah and Ben'ja-min remained loyal to Re-ho-bo'am.

From this time the kingdom of Is'ra-el was di-vi'-ded, and the two di-vi'sions often made war upon each other. Both Jer-o-bo'am and Re-ho-bo'am set up idols for the people to worship, and led them into all the sins of the heathen nations around them. In the fifth year of Re-ho-bo'am's reign, the king of Egypt came to Je-ru'sa-lem, and took away the treasures of the Lord's house, and the treasures of the palace of King Sol'o-mon.

The kingdom of Is'ra-el con-tin'ued about two hundred and fifty years. Then the ten tribes were carried away into cap-tiv'i-ty. About one hundred and fifty years later the people of Judah were also taken into cap-tiv'i-ty by Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, king of Bab'y-lon.

Most of the kings who reigned over Is'ra-el and

JER-O-BO′AM LEADS IS′RA-EL TO SIN BY WOR′SHIP-ING HEATHEN GODS

Judah during these years were evil men; but there were a few who loved the Lord, threw down the idols that were set up, and tried to lead the people back to the worship of the true God. The Lord also raised up prophets and teachers during these years, so that whoev'er wished to serve him might know the true and right way.

This part of the his'to-ry of the children of Is'ra-el is very sad. God had led them into a beau'ti-ful land; he had given them wise laws; he had helped them to drive out their en'e-mies; and he had set over them the wisest and greatest king in the whole earth.

But no one is so wise or pow'er-ful that he can in his own strength do right, or safely dis-o-bey' even one command of God. And it was in the days of this wise, rich, and great king that the downfall of Is'ra-el began.

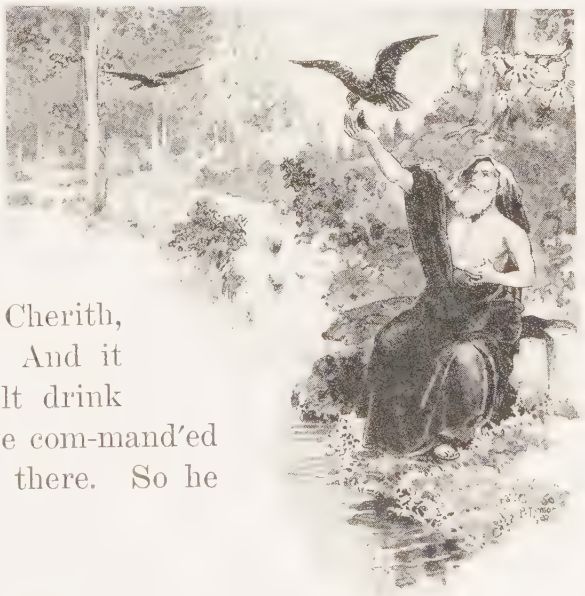
F. ADAMS, ARTIST

E-LI'JAH WARNS AHAB OF THE COMING DROUTH

The Story of Elijah

IN the days of wicked King Ahab, the seventh king of Is'ra-el, the Lord sent his Spirit upon a man called E-li'jah, who lived in Gil'e-ad. We are not told an'y-thing about the early life of E-li'jah: we do not know who his parents were, or how he was taught when a child. The first time he is spoken of, he came di-rect'ly to King Ahab with a message from the Lord.

"And E-li'jah the Tishbite, who was of the in-hab'-it-ants of Gil'e-ad, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Is'ra-el liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but ac-cord'ing to my word.



"And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have com-mand'ed the ravens to feed thee there. So he

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW OF ZAR'E-PHATH

went and did ac-cord'ing unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

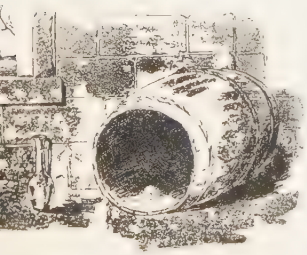
"And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zar'e-phath, which be-long'eth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have com-mand'ed a widow woman there to sustain thee.

"So he arose and went to Zar'e-phath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gath'er-ing of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

"And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

"And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gath'er-ing two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

"And E-li'jah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Is'ra-el, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.



E-LI'JAH RE-STOR'ING THE SON TO HIS MOTHER

"And she went and did ac-cord'ing to the saying of E-li'jah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, ac-cord'ing to the word of the Lord, which he spake by E-li'jah."

ELIJAH RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON

"And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

"And she said unto E-li'jah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to re-mem'brance, and to slay my son?

"And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

"And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of E-li'jah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And E-li'jah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and de-liv'ered him unto his mother: and E-li'jah said, See, thy son liveth.

"And the woman said to E-li'jah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

"And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to E-li'jah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth."

"And it came to pass, when Ahab saw E-li'jah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Is'ra-el?

"And he answered, I have not troubled Is'ra-el; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have for-sa'ken the com-mand'ments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Ba'al-im. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Is'ra-el unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jez'e-bel's table.

"So Ahab sent unto all the children of Is'ra-el, and gathered the prophets to-geth'er unto Mount Carmel.

"And E-li'jah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two o-pin'ions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

"Then said E-li'jah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your

gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that an'swer-eth by fire, let him be God.

"And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And E-li'jah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

"And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

"And it came to pass at noon, that E-li'jah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pur-su'ing, or he is in a journey, or per-ad-ven'ture he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

"And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

"And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they proph'e-sied until the time of the of'fer-ing of the evening sac'ri-fice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that re-gard'ed. And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And E-li'jah took twelve stones, accord'ing to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Is'ra-el shall be thy

THE SAC'RI-FICE ON MOUN I CARMEL

name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sac'ri-fice, and on the wood.

"And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time.

"And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

"And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the of'fer-ing of the evening sac'ri-fice, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of A'bra-ham, Isaac, and of Is'ra-el, let it be known this day that thou art God in Is'ra-el, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

"Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sac'ri-fice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

"And E-li'jah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took

E-LI'JAH'S PRAYER FOR RAIN

them: and E-li'jah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

"And E-li'jah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of a-bun'dance of rain.

"So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And E-li'jah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there a-ris'eth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy char'i-ot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

"And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jez're-el. And the hand of the Lord was on E-li'jah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jez're-el.

"And Ahab told Jez'e-bel all that E-li'jah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jez'e-bel sent a mes'sen-ger unto E-li'jah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if

A. G. GOW, ARTIST

E-LI′JAH RUNS BEFORE AHAB'S CHAR′I-OT TO THE ENTRANCE OF JEZ′RE-EL

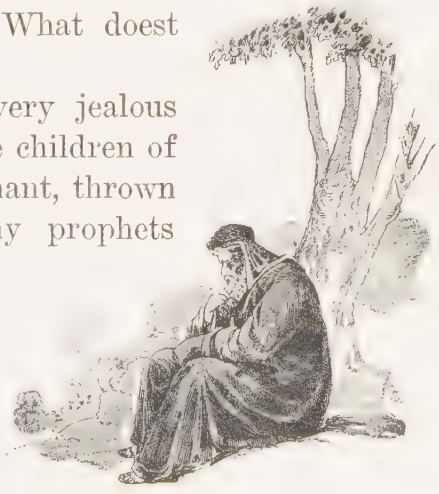
I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-mor'row about this time.

"And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Be-er'she-ba, which be-long'eth to Ju-dah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wil'der-ness, and came and sat down under a ju'ni-per tree: and he re-quest'ed for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

"And as he lay and slept under a ju'ni-per tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

"And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Is'ra-el have for-sa'ken thy cov'e-nant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.



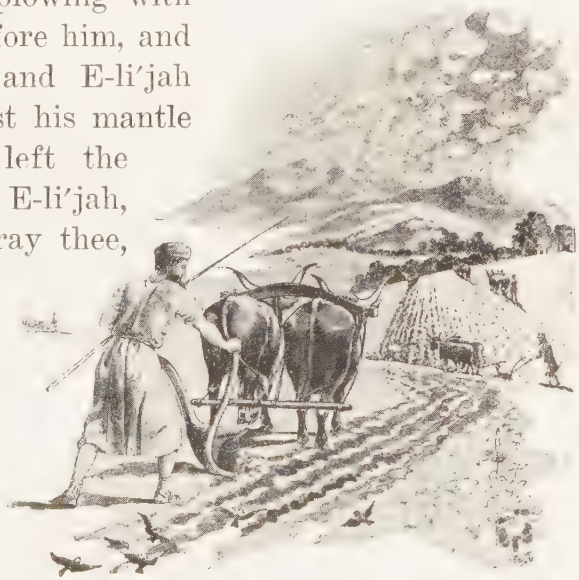
"And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so when

E-li'jah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the en'ter-ing in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Is'ra-el have for-sa'ken thy cov'e-nant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

"And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wil'der-ness of Da-mas'cus: and when thou comest, anoint Ha'za-el to be king over Syr'i-a: and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Is'ra-el: and E-li'sha the son of Shaphat shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." E-li'jah thought he was the only one left on the earth who served God; but the Lord said: "I have left me seven thousand in Is'ra-el, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal."

"So he de-part'ed thence, and found E-li'sha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and E-li'jah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after E-li'jah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what



E-LI′JAH CHOOSES E-LI′SHA IN HIS PLACE

have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the in'stru-ments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after E-li'jah, and min'is-tered unto him."

ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN

"And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up E-li'jah into heaven by a whirlwind, that E-li'jah went with E-li'sha from Gilgal.

"And E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And E-li'sha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.

"And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

"And E-li'jah said unto him, E-li'sha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jer'i-cho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jer'i-cho.

"And the sons of the prophets that were at Jer'i-cho came to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

"And E-li'jah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to

THERE APPEARED A CHAR'I-OT OF FIRE AND HORSES OF FIRE

Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

"And E-li'jah took his mantle, and wrapped it togeth'er, and smote the waters, and they were di-vi'ded hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And E-li'sha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

"And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: never-the-less', if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a char'i-ot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both a-sun'der; and E-li'jah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

The story of E-li'jah's won'der-ful life and glo'ri-ous reward teaches us how ten'der-ly God cares for his children. In time of famine he pro-vi'ded E-li'jah with food; he gave him strength and power before the wicked king; he knew when E-li'jah was sad and dis-heart'ened, and com'fort-ed him; and at last he took him to be with himself, with godly Enoch and faithful Moses. What an honor for E-li'jah's life of service!

THE WATERS PARTED, AND E-LI'SHA WENT OVER

The Story of Elisha

AS E-li'jah and E-li'sha walked along to-geth'er, on the day when the man of God was taken to heaven, E-li'jah said, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." And E-li'sha asked for a double portion of the spirit that was with E-li'jah.

"And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: never-the-less', if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee."

How care'ful-ly E-li'sha watched his great leader then! Not for a moment did he take his eyes from his friend and teacher. This faith'ful-ness had its reward; for when "there appeared a char'i-ot of fire, and horses of fire, and E-li'jah went up by a whirlwind into heaven," E-li'sha saw it.

How ear'nest-ly he stood gazing up into heaven, to catch one last glimpse of the shining fiery char'i-ot! At last, when he could see it no more, he "took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces." Then, picking up the mantle of E-li'jah, which had fallen at his feet, he turned to go back over the way that he and

E-li'jah had so lately traveled to-geth'er. From that day the same spirit and power that had been with E-li'-jah were with E-li'sha.

And E-li'sha took the mantle, "and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of E-li'jah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and E-li'sha went over."

Some of the sons of the prophets who had followed E-li'jah and E-li'sha as far as the Jordan, saw this mir'a-cle, and they said, "The spirit of E-li'jah doth rest on E-li'sha." This was true, and from that day forward E-li'sha did many won'der-ful mir'a-cles in Is'ra-el.

After crossing the river, E-li'sha stopped for a while at Jer'i-cho. "And the men of the city said unto E-li'-sha, Behold, I pray thee, the sit-u-a'tion of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

"And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

"So the waters were healed, ac-cord'-ing to the saying of E-li'sha.

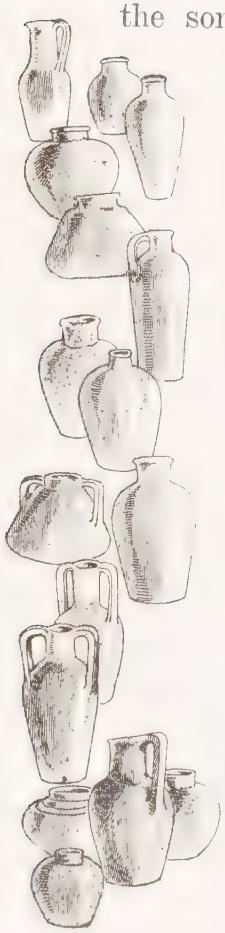
"And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out

LITTLE CHILDREN MOCKING E-LI'SHA

of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head."

In speaking in this way to the servant of the Lord, these children were re'al-ly mocking God, and he sent a dreadful pun'ish-ment upon them. Two bears came out of the wood, and forty-two of the children were killed. This shows us that the Lord holds children respon'si-ble for the wrong things they do, just as if they were older.

ELISHA AND THE POOR WIDOW



"Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto E-li'sha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the cred'it-or is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

"And E-li'sha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not an'y-thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

"Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

"So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

"And it came to pass. when the vessels were

full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

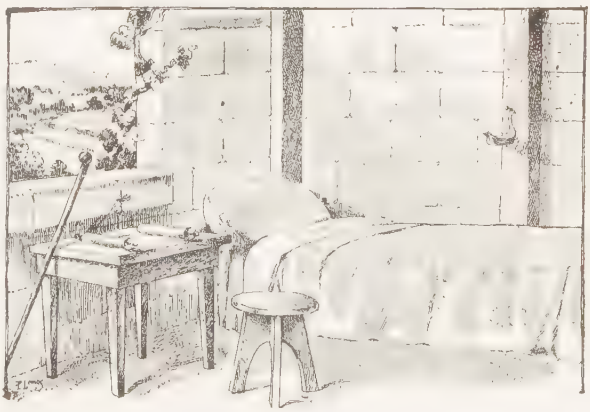
"Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."

ELISHA RAISES THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON

As E-li'sha went from one place to an-oth'er in his work, he often stopped in a certain city called Shunem. Here he ate bread and rested in the house of a good woman, who, with her husband, treated the prophet kindly, and made him welcome. After one of these visits, when E-li'sha had set out again on his journey, this woman said to her husband: —

"Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us con-tin'u-al-ly. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a can'dle-stick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."

The next time E-li'sha stopped at this woman's house to rest, he was taken to the little room that had been built for him, and furnished with all that was needed for his comfort. The heart of the prophet was touched at this kindness, and he asked what should be done for this woman who had shown all this care. Then his servant



G. MANTON, ARTIST

E-LI'SHA AND THE SHU'NAM-MITE WOMAN

answered that she had no child. So E-li'sha sent for the woman, and told her that she should have a son.

One day when her son had grown large enough to run about in the fields, "he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

"And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

"And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

"Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.

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THE SICK CHILD

"So she went and came unto the man of God to Mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Ge-ha'zi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shu'nam-mite: run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well."

When the woman came to E-li'sha, and told him her trouble, the prophet told Ge-ha'zi to go quickly, not stopping to speak to any one on the way, and lay his staff on the face of the child.

But the mother would not go home till the prophet went with her. And "Ge-ha'zi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing.

"And when E-li'sha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

"And he called Ge-ha'zi, and said, Call this Shu'nam-mite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

"Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out."

BENJAMIN WEST, ARTIST

THE DEAD SON RESTORED TO LIFE

The Lord is pleased when-ev'er his children show kindness to others. In his Word he tells us not to for-get to en-ter-tain' strangers, and reminds us that some who have done this, have en-ter-tained' angels un-a-wares'. Jesus himself said that no one who gave to an-oth'er even so much as a cup of cold water, in the name of a dis-ci'ple, would in an'y-wise lose his reward.

OTHER MIRACLES

Not long after re-stor'ing the Shu'nam-mite's son to life, E-li'sha went to Gilgal. "And there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

"And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof."

Then E-li'sha command'ed them to bring meal. "And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the

people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot."

E-li'sha was a teacher as well as a prophet. A number of young men, sons of the prophets, lived with him part of the time, and he taught them the way of the Lord. One time, when their number was too large for the place where they lived, "the sons of the prophets said unto E-li'sha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.

"And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

"So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it."

At one time the king of Syr'i-a made war against Is'ra-el; but no matter how se'cret-ly he moved his camp from one place to an-oth'er, the king of Is'ra-el heard of it, and saved himself.

The king of Syr'i-a was troubled when he saw this, for he thought there was a traitor

among his soldiers. So he called them to-geth'er, and asked, "Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Is'ra-el?

"And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but E-li'sha, the prophet that is in Is'ra-el, telleth the king of Is'ra-el the words that thou speakest in thy bed'cham-ber.

"And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

"Therefore sent he thither horses, and char'i-ots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and char'i-ots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

"And E-li'sha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and char'i-ots of fire round about E-li'sha."

Thus the Lord saved the prophet from those who would have taken his life. We know that angels are always with those who love God, to protect and keep them; for the Lord has left us this promise: "The angel of the Lord en-camp'eth round about them that fear him, and de-liv'er-eth them."

Very often when we are in danger, even if we do not know it, if our eyes could be opened, we would see

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"THE MOUNTAIN WAS FULL OF HORSES AND CHAR'I-OTS OF FIRE ROUND ABOUT E-LI'SHA"

angels about us to keep us from harm. Let us think of this when-ev'er we are in trouble, or tempted to do wrong.

E-li'sha lived many years in Is'ra-el, and taught the people the good and the right way. Fre'quent-ly he was sent before kings and great men with mes'sa-ges from the Lord. Wher-ev'er he went, he was faithful and earnest; and God blessed him, and let his Holy Spirit be with him.

When E-li'sha was an old man, and was fallen sick of the sickness of which he died, "Joash the king of Is'ra-el came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the char'i-ot of Is'-ra-el, and the horsemen thereof.

"And E-li'sha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Is'ra-el, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and E-li'sha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then E-li'sha

W. H. MARGETSON, ARTIST

THE ARROW OF THE LORD'S DE-LIV'ER-ANCE

said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's de-liv'er-ance, and the arrow of de-liv'er-ance from Syr'i-a: for thou shalt smite the Syr'i-ans in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.

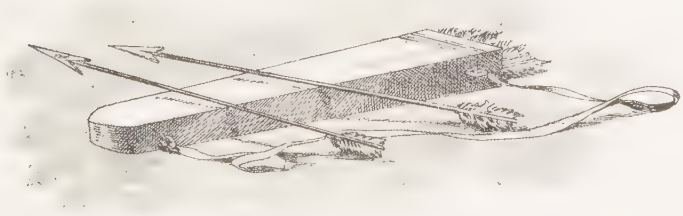
"And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Is'ra-el, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.

"And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syr'i-a till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syr'i-a but thrice."

This was a severe reproof to the king. The prophet had just told him that the Lord would de-liv'er Is'ra-el from Syr'i-a, and this should have cheered Joash so he would have shown gladness and courage. But instead of striking many times with the arrows, he struck only three times and stopped.

God is not pleased with those who are not earnest and active in the battle against sin. He will always help those who re'al-ly strive to o-ver-come', but he can not give great blessings to those who are only half-heart'ed in his service.

Not long after this visit of King Joash, E-li'sha died, and was buried. In his death, Is'ra-el lost a faithful friend and teacher and a mighty prophet.



F. W. TOPHAM, ARTIST

NA'A-MAN'S WIFE AND THE LITTLE CAPTIVE MAID

The Story of A Little Captive Maid

IN the days of the prophet E-li'sha the king of Syr'i-a came often against Is'ra-el, to make war against them. Sometimes small com'pa-nies of Syr'i-an soldiers would go into some town or village, drive out the people, destroy their homes, and carry to their own land what-ev'er was val'u-a-ble.

One time when the Syr'i-ans had gone out by com'-pa-nies, they "brought away captive out of the land of Is'ra-el a little maid; and she waited on Na'a-man's wife." "Now Na'a-man, captain of the host of the king of Syr'i-a, was a great man with his master, and hon'or-a-ble: he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper."

No matter how rich, or great, or beloved, or pow'er-ful a man was, if he had this dreadful disease, it was as if he were al-read'y dead. There was no way by

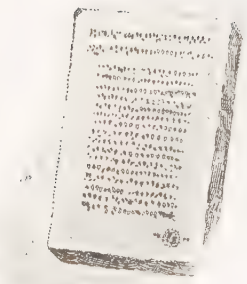
which he could be cured. So there was deep sorrow in the beau'ti-ful home of Na'a-man; and the little maid, when she saw the grief and tears of her mistress, pitied her. She thought of the good prophet E-li'sha, and of the mighty mir'a-cles which the Lord had given him power to do. One day when her mistress was very sad, the little girl said to her, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Sa-ma'ri-a! for he would re-cov'er him of his lep'ro-sy."

"And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Is'ra-el.

"And the king of Syr'i-a said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Is'ra-el. And he depart'ed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

"And he brought the letter to the king of Is'ra-el, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Na'a-man my servant to thee, that thou mayest re-cov'er him of his lep'ro-sy."

The king of Is'ra-el did not have the simple, trusting faith of the little captive girl in Syr'i-a. Instead of sending for E-li'sha, when he had read the letter, the king "rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to re-cov'er a man of his lep'ro-sy? wherefore con-sid'er, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.



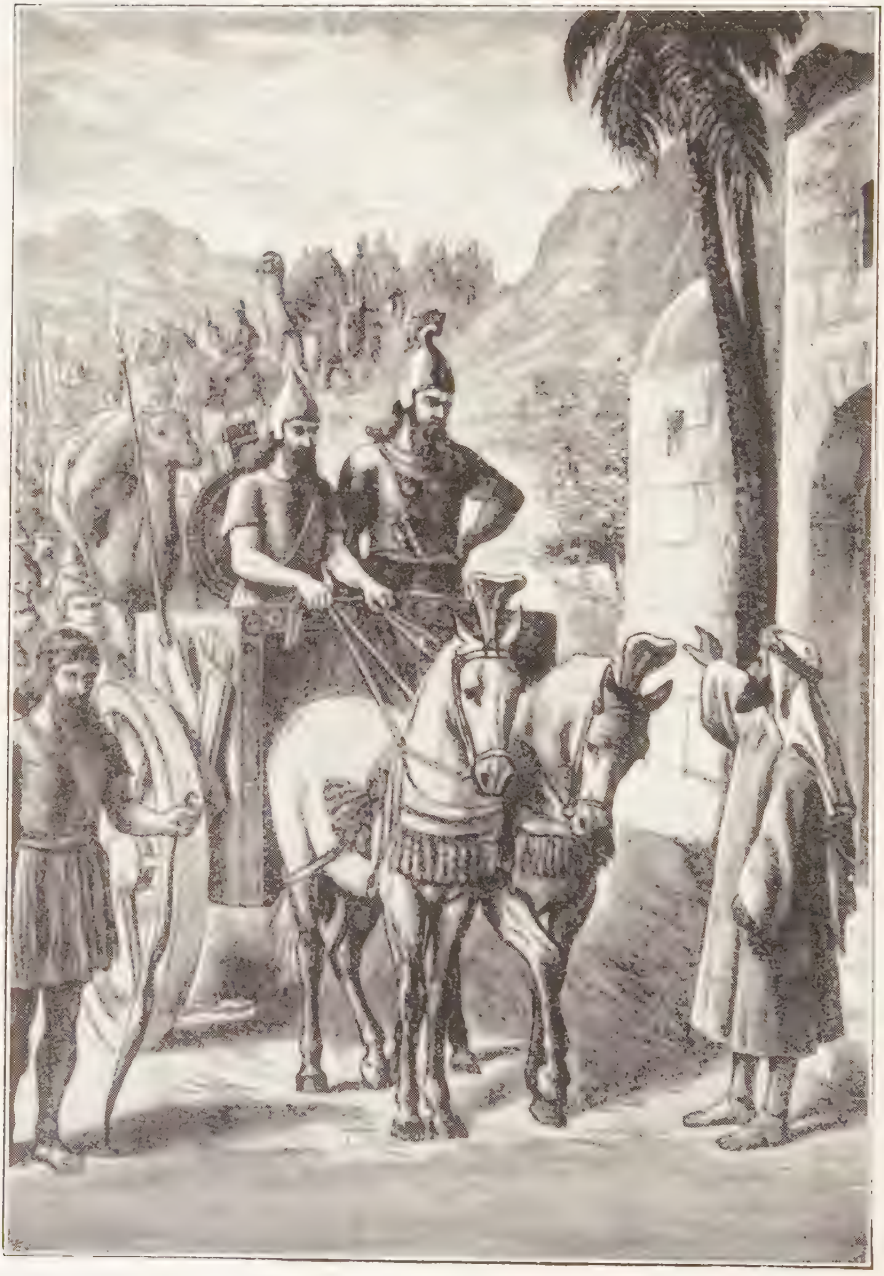
And it was so, when E-li'sha the man of God had heard that the king of Is'ra-el had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he

shall know that there is a prophet in Is'ra-el. So Na'a-man came with his horses and with his char'i-ot, and stood at the door of the house of E-li'sha.

"And E-li'sha sent a mes'sen-ger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

Na'a-man was very angry when he received this message. He was used, when his char'i-ot stood at the door, to have the people run out to meet him, and bow down before him, and show him great respect and honor. And E-li'sha, a humble prophet, did not even come out to see him, but only sent him word to go and wash in the Jordan seven times!

"Behold, I thought," said Na'a-man, "He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and re-cov'er the leper. Are not Ab'a-na and Pharpar,



NA'A-MAN AT THE DOOR OF E-LI'SHA

rivers of Da-mas'cus, better than all the waters of Is'-ra-el? may I not wash in them, and be clean?

"So he turned and went away in a rage.

"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, ac-cord'ing to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

"And he returned to the man of God, he and all his com'pa-ny, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Is'ra-el." He also said, "Thy serv-ant will henceforth offer neither burnt'-of-fer-ing nor sac'ri-fice unto other gods, but unto the Lord."

Because Na'a-man was very grateful for all that had been done for him, he wished to give the prophet a rich present. But E-li'sha would take no gift. "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand," said the prophet, "I will receive none."

"And he urged him to take it; but he refused."

The gifts of the Lord are so precious that money can not buy them. Not all the silver and gold and precious stones in Syr'i-a could have made the flesh of Na'a-man come again as the flesh of a little child. E-li'sha wanted Na'a-man to un-der-stand' that it was God who healed him, and that the Lord gives his love and mercy freely.

But Ge-ha'zi, the servant of E-li'sha, cov'et-ed the rich gifts offered to the prophet. He ran after Na'a-man, and said: "My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount E'phra-im two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

"And Na'a-man said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they de-part'ed. But he went in, and stood before his master. And E-li'sha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Ge-ha'zi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

"And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his char'i-ot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments? The lep'ro-sy therefore of Na'a-man shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for-ev'er. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

By taking Na'a-man's presents, and trying to de-

ceive E-li'sha, Ge-ha'zi showed the wicked spirit of Achan, who stole a wedge of gold and a rich garment from the spoil of Jer-i'cho. And, like Achan, he received a ter'ri-ble pun'ish-ment for his sin.

What hap'pi-ness there must have been in that Syr'i-an home when Na'-a-man returned to it in perfect health! Not only was he well, but he had also gained a knowledge of the true God, who is able not only to cure the dis-eas'es of men's bodies, but also to forgive their sins, and to make them pure in heart.

A most beau'ti-ful ex-am'ple was set by this little captive girl to all children who have an op-por-tu'-ni-ty to bear witness that they believe in the power of the true God. How eas'i-ly she might have allowed her own lone'li-ness and sorrow to fill her heart, so she would have had no care for the sorrow of her mistress; or she might have excused herself from speaking of the prophet of the true God in that heathen home; or, if she had been selfish and un-for-giv'ing, she might have been glad to see trouble come to her master and mistress.

But she did none of these things. She went about her daily tasks bravely and cheer'ful-ly; and when the time came, she was not afraid to speak of the prophet of Is'ra-el.

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CASTELLI, ARTIST

THE JEWS AS CAPTIVES ON THEIR WAY TO BAB'Y-LON

The Story of Daniel

MORE than twen'ty-five hundred years ago a little Jewish boy was born to a noble fam'i-ly in Je-ru'sa-lem. His parents called their son Daniel. Though his childhood was passed in the days when many of the Jews did not serve the Lord, Daniel was taught to love and fear the true God.

When Daniel was still a youth, Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, king of Bab'y-lon, came against Je-ru'sa-lem with a great army. He made the Jews his servants, and carried many of them away captive to his own land. He also took away part of the vessels of the Lord's house, and put them in the treas'ure-house of his idols in Bab'y-lon.

Among the Jews who were carried away as captives at this time were certain children of princes, "in whom was no blemish, but well-fa'vored, and skilful in knowledge." They were to stand in the king's palace, and be taught the language and the wisdom of the Chal-de'ans.

Among these "children of

R. LEINWEBER, ARTIST

THE CAPTIVES IN A STRANGE, HEATHEN LAND

princes" was Daniel, with three of his young friends, who also loved and served God.

The king meant to treat these young men kindly. He ap-point'ed wise men to teach them, and said they should be fed from the meat and wine that were served on his own table.

But Daniel knew that often the meat from the king's table would be such as the Lord had for-bid'den the Jews to eat. Then, too, it was often first offered as a sac'ri-fice to idols, and the wine used was poured out before them. Daniel wished to keep himself from every evil way; so when he knew the king's plan, he "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he re-quest'ed of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

"Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath ap-point'ed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me en-dan'ger my head to the king."

Then said Daniel: "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and

DANIEL AND HIS COM-PAN'IONS REFUSE THE RICH FOOD AND WINE
PRO-VID'ED BY THE KING

water to drink. Then let our coun'te-nan-ces be looked upon before thee, and the coun'te-nance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants."

"So he con-sent'ed to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their coun'te-nan-ces appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse."

God was pleased with Daniel and his friends because they took their stand so firmly on the side of right. In the years of study that followed, he "gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had un-der-stand'ing in all visions and dreams."

At last the time came when Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, were taken before King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar.

"And in all matters of wisdom and un-der-stand'-ing, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the ma-gi'cians and as-trol'o-gers that were in all his realm."

Perhaps some child may think that this matter of

DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS EX-AM′INED BY THE KING

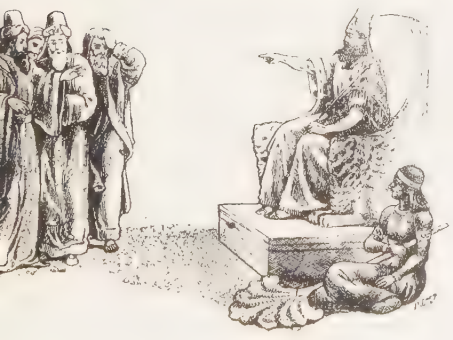
eating and drinking was a little thing, and that he would have said nothing about it. But God had given the Jews certain laws in regard to these very things, and Daniel had been taught from childhood to obey them. The Lord says, "Them that honor me I will honor;" and this story of Daniel and his friends shows that God does honor those who obey his commands.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

One night King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar had a strange dream, which troubled him very much. He could not sleep. When he awoke, he could not re-mem'ber what the dream was. So he called for all the wise men of his kingdom, and asked them to tell him his dream, and to make known what it meant.

These wise men pre-tend'ed to know all kinds of secret things, and what should come to pass in the future. They professed to be able to talk with the dead, and to reveal the meaning of all dreams. So the king ex-pect'ed them to relate his dream at once, and explain its meaning.

But not one of these wise men could tell the king his dream. They said if he would tell them the dream, they would show what it meant. The king answered that if they would tell him his dream, he would know that they could give its meaning. He also said that unless they told the dream, they should be put to death; but if they would tell it, they should have gifts and rewards and great honors.



THE KING'S DREAM OF A GREAT IMAGE

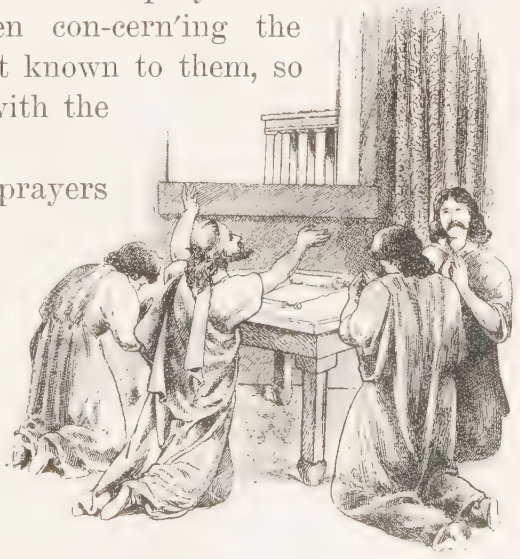
The wise men answered that there was not a man in the kingdom that could do what the king asked. "It is a rare thing that the king re-quir'eth," they said, "and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

"For this cause the king was angry and very fu'ri-ous, and com-mand'ed to destroy all the wise men of Bab'y-lon."

Daniel and his friends were counted among the wise men; so when the decree went forth that all these men should be slain, Ar'i-och, the captain of the king's guard, went to take Daniel with the others.

Daniel had not heard of the king's decree. When he un-der-stood' it, he went to the king and asked for time, saying he would tell the king the dream and the meaning of it. Because he trusted the Lord, Daniel had faith to assure King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar that the dream should be made known to him.

Even in his anger, the king granted the request of Daniel. As soon as he left Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, Daniel found his three friends, and told them the whole matter. He asked them to pray with him to the God of heaven con-cern'ing the secret, that he would make it known to them, so that they might not perish with the wise men of Bab'y-lon.



God heard the earnest prayers of these young men. We read that the secret was "revealed unto Daniel in a night vision."

Do you think that as

DANIEL IN-TER'PRET-ING NEB-U-CHAD-NEZ'ZAR'S DREAM

soon as Daniel learned the secret, he ran to tell the king, so his life would be safe? Oh, no! Daniel stayed to offer a prayer of thanks-giv'ing to God before he went to the king. Very often when people are in trouble, and pray for help, they forget God as soon as their prayers are answered. But Daniel loved the Lord more than his own life, and he would not go to the king without first thanking God for granting his request.

When Daniel was taken before Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, the king asked: "Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the in-ter-pre-ta'-tion thereof?"

Daniel took no honor to himself. "There is a God in heaven," he said, "that re-veal'eth secrets, and maketh known what shall be in the latter days."

Then he told the king's dream, in these words: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was ex'cel-lent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was ter'ri-ble. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces to-geth'er, and became like the chaff of the

THE GREAT IMAGE

summer thresh'ing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

After re-la'ting the dream, Daniel told the king its meaning. Each part of the image stood for a great kingdom, or nation. Daniel told first about the head of gold. He said: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And where-so-ev'er the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold."

By this we see that the head of gold of the image meant the king of Bab'y-lon. But this splendid kingdom would not always last.

"After thee shall arise an-oth'er kingdom in-fe'-ri-or to thee," said Daniel. This meant that the next kingdom would not be so rich nor so pow'er-ful as Bab'y-lon. It was Me-do-Per'sia, and was shown by the breast and arms of silver in the king's dream of the great image.

The brass part of the image meant a third kingdom that would follow Me-do-Per'sia. This kingdom was Grecia. Though it was a great kingdom, ruling over all the earth, it was not so rich nor so splendid as either Bab'y-lon or Me-do-Per'sia.

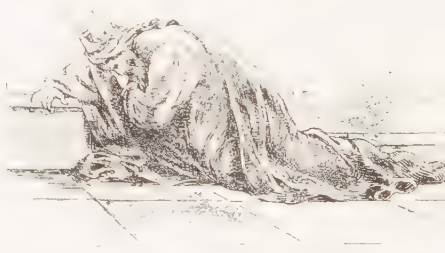
The kingdom that followed Grecia was Rome. This was "strong as iron." In the image it was rep-re-sent'ed by the legs of iron.

But the feet and toes of the image were "part

of iron and part of clay." This meant that by and by this kingdom would become weak, and be di-vi'ded.

"In the days of these kings," or kingdoms, said Daniel, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and it shall stand for-ev'er." This is the kingdom that Jesus will set up at his coming, when all the kingdoms of the earth are destroyed. His kingdom will fill all the earth, and will be a kingdom of peace.

When Daniel had told the dream, and what it meant, the king fell on his face, and said: "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a re-veal'er of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret."



"Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Bab'y-lon, and chief of the gov'ern-ors over all the wise men of Bab'y-lon." Daniel's three friends were also made rulers in Bab'y-lon.

THE FIERY FURNACE

Though Neb-u-chad-nez'zar had said that the God of heaven was a "God of gods," he still worshiped idols. By and by he made a new idol, all of gold, and nearly a hundred feet tall. This idol the king set up on a high ped'es-tal in the beau'ti-ful plain of Dura, near Bab'y-lon, where every one could see it.

When the image was finished and set up, Neb-u-chad-nez'zar sent for all the great men in every part

of his kingdom to come and worship it. So on a certain day, all the princes and gov'ern-ors and judges and treas'ur-ers and rulers in the kingdom came and stood before the image. While they waited, a herald rode through the great com'pa-ny, blowing a trumpet, and calling out in a loud voice that as soon as the people heard the sound of the cornet, and harp, and other music, every one was to fall down and worship the golden image that the king had set up.

"Whoso falleth not down and wor'ship-eth," cried the herald, "shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

In that com'pa-ny of princes and rulers and wise men were Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, the friends of Daniel. They heard the cry of the herald; they knew that the fiery furnace was ready for those who did not obey the king's command; yet they did not bow down to the image nor worship it. These men truly loved and feared God; they chose to obey his law rather than the command of the king. They would even rather die than dis-o-bey' the command, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."

Some of the men who saw Shadrach, Meshach, and

RE-FUS'ING TO BOW DOWN TO THE KING'S GOLDEN IMAGE

A-bed'ne-go standing when all the rest of the com'pa-ny had fallen down before the image, went at once to the king. "There are certain Jews," said these men, "whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Bab'y-lon, Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go; these men, O king, have not re-gard'ed thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

"Then Neb-u-chad-nez'zar in his rage and fury com-mand'ed to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'-ne-go. Then they brought these men before the king."

Neb-u-chad-nez'zar seems to have had respect for these young men, even in his anger; for he asked them if it was true that they would not worship the image. He also said that if they would fall down and worship it the next time the music sounded, it would still be well with them.

But Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go did not hes'i-tate. "O Neb-u-chad-nez'zar," they said, "if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to de-liv'er us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will de-liv'er us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

GOD'S PRO-TEC'TION IN THE FI'ER-Y FURN\CE

"Then was Neb-u-chad-nez'zar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go: therefore he spake, and command'ed that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he command'ed the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

"Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

"Therefore because the king's com-mand'ment was urgent, and the furnace ex-ceed'ing hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go.

"And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Neb-u-chad-nez'zar the king was as-ton'ied, and rose up in haste, and said unto his coun'sel-ors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

"He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

"Then Neb-u-chad-nez'zar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, came forth of the midst of the fire.

"And the princes, gov'ern-ors, and captains, and

the king's coun'sel-ors, being gathered to-geth'er, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

"Then Neb-u-chad-nez'zar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, who hath sent his angel, and de-liv'ered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak an'y-thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can de-liv'er after this sort.

"Then the king pro-mo'ted Shadrach, Meshach, and A-bed'ne-go, in the province of Bab'y-lon."

How eas'i-ly these young men might have excused themselves in this trying hour from being true to God! They might have said, "We will bow down, to save our lives, but we will not worship the image." If they had done this, they would have lost a great op-por-tu'ni-ty to witness for the God of Is'ra-el. The Lord wants his children now, as then, to witness faith'ful-ly for him in hard places, as well as in the little things that come to them day by day.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SECOND DREAM

The kingdom of Neb-u-chad-nez'zar became greater and greater, for the Lord gave him vic'to-ry in wars with other nations, and made him rich and pow'er-ful. Neb-u-chad-nez'zar did not always give God the glory; his heart was filled with pride, and he loved to exalt himself. But the Lord, who loved this king, taught him by a sad lesson how little is man's strength and greatness when God is not with him. One day when Neb-u-chad-nez'zar was resting in his beau'ti-ful palace, he had an-oth'er strange dream, which troubled him. Again he sent for his wise men; and when they came, he asked them what the dream meant. But when they heard it, they could not tell its meaning.

"But at the last," says the king, "Daniel came in before me, whose name was Bel-te-shaz'zar." To him the king told his dream, saying:—

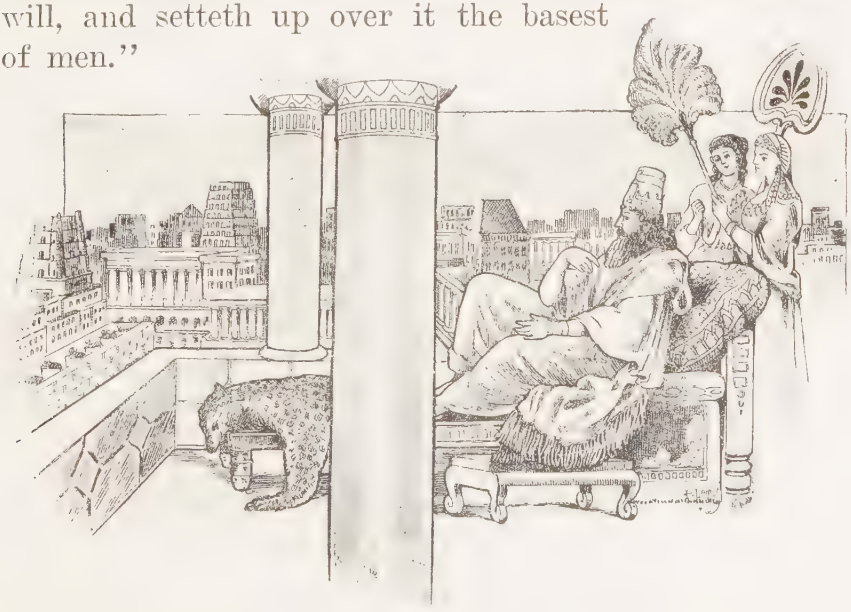
"Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed: I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves

"I SAW, AND BEHOLD A TREE"

thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

"I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; he cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: nev-er-the-less' leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whom-so-ev'er he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."



THE PROUD AND BOASTFUL KING

Daniel was greatly troubled when he heard the dream; for he un-der-stood′ its meaning at once, and knew that a dreadful thing would happen to the king. He did not like to tell the meaning of the dream, so he sat for a long time without speaking.

At last the king said, "Bel-te-shaz′zar, let not the dream, or the in-ter-pre-ta′tion thereof, trouble thee."

So Daniel told the king that the great tree was the king himself. "It is thou, O king," he said, "that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy do-min′ion to the end of the earth."

Then he told the king the meaning of the words of the watcher who came down from heaven, and said, "Hew the tree down, and destroy it."

"They shall drive thee from men," said Daniel, "and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whom-so-ev′er he will. And whereas they com-mand′ed to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."

Daniel urged Neb-u-chad-nez′zar to heed the warning given in this dream. "O king," he entreat′ed, "let my counsel be acceptable unto

THE KING EATING GRASS LIKE AN OX

thee, and break off thy sins by right'eous-ness, and thine in-iq'ui-ties by showing mercy to the poor."

But Neb-u-chad-nez'zar did not long re-mem'ber the warning of the dream, or the earnest advice of Daniel.

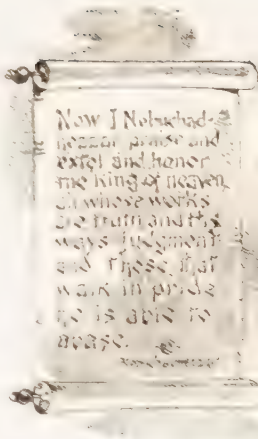
Bab'y-lon was at this time the greatest city in all the world. Its walls were high, its gates were strong, and it had fine pal'a-ces and beau'ti-ful hanging gardens. As Neb-u-chad-nez'zar thought of his great power, and looked at the city and its wonders, his heart was often filled with pride.

One day, only a year after he had been warned to forsake his evil ways, as the king was looking about him, his heart was lifted up, and he said: "Is not this great Bab'y-lon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my maj'es-ty?"

Thus the king took to himself the honor that belonged to God; for it is by God's power alone that men become great. The Lord was not pleased when Neb-u-chad-nez'zar spoke in this boastful way; and "while the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is de-part'ed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."

That same hour was King Neb-u-

chad-nez'zar "driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."



At the end of the seven times, or seven years, Neb-u-chad-nez'zar looked up to heaven, and the Lord gave him again his un-der-stand'ing. He also restored to Neb-u-chad-nez'zar his power and kingdom, so he was honored as before by all his people. In this sad expe'ri-ence the king learned that God knows even the thoughts of men's hearts, and that he is not pleased when they exalt themselves.

Soon after this, King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar sent a message to the people of every nation and kingdom in the world, telling them about his dream and its meaning, and how for seven years he had eaten grass like the beasts of the field. When he had told how God had given him again his right mind, and "ex'cel-lent maj'es-ty," the king said: —

"Now I Neb-u-chad-nez'zar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

When Neb-u-chad-nez'zar died, his son reigned in Bab'y-lon two years. A few years later, Bel-shaz'zar, the grandson of Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, sat upon the throne. In the Bible, men are sometimes called the fathers of

their grand'chil-dren, and of those who live many years after them. So in the story of Bel-shaz'zar, he is called the son of Neb-u-chad-nez'zar.

Bel-shaz'zar was a wicked and cruel king. During his short reign the kingdom of Bab'y-lon — the head of gold in Neb-u-chad-nez'zar's dream of the great image — was overthrown.

The kings of Me'di-a and Persia gathered a large army, and came against Bab'y-lon, and besieged it. Bel-shaz'zar knew the dream about the great image, and that the Lord of heaven had said Bab'y-lon should be followed by an-oth'er kingdom.

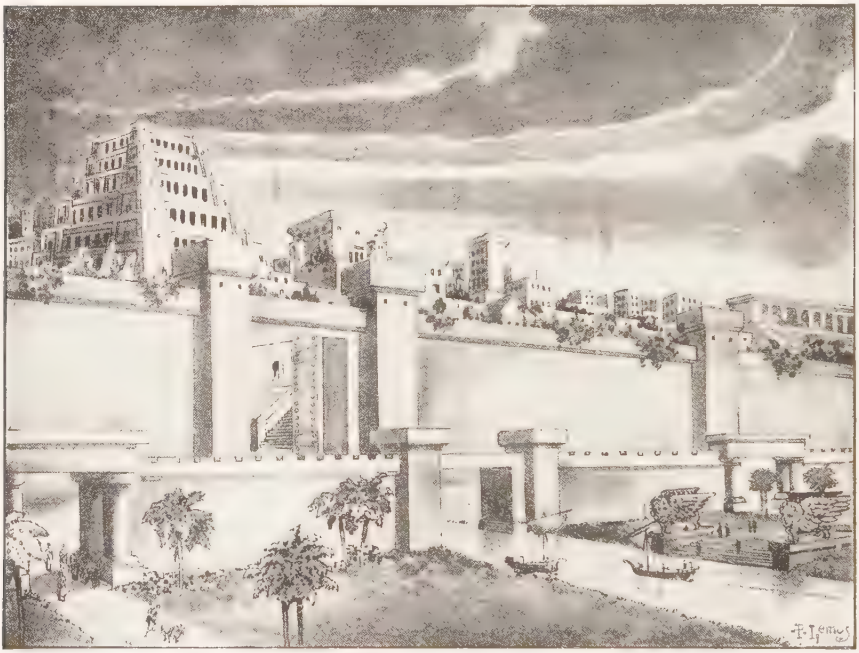
But in his wicked heart he thought that no army could pos'si-bly break down the strong walls of his city, nor open its gates. In its store'hous-es had been gathered food enough to last the people for twenty years; so there was no fear of famine. So safe and secure did the king feel, that even while his en'e-mies were besieg'ing the city, he made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank a great deal of wine before them.

Not only did he do this, but he sent for the gold and silver vessels that had been brought to Bab'y-lon from the house of the Lord at Je-ru'sa-lem. When they were brought, the king and his wives and drunken guests drank wine from them, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, and of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

This wicked feast had a ter'ri-ble end. We read: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the can'dle-stick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

"Then the king's coun'te-nance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against an-oth'er.

"The king cried aloud to bring in the as-trol'o-gers, the Chal-de'ans, and the sooth'say-ers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Bab'y-lon, Who-so-



HE THOUGHT NO ARMY COULD DESTROY HIS CITY

ev'er shall read this writing, and show me the in-ter-pre-ta'tion thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the in-ter-pre-ta'tion thereof.

"Then was King Bel-shaz'zar greatly troubled, and

his coun'te-nance was changed in him, and his lords were as-ton'ied."

When the queen heard the words of the king, she said, "Let Daniel be called, and he will show the in-ter-pre-ta'tion."

"Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the cap-tiv'i-ty of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?"

Bel-shaz'zar told Daniel that if he could read the writing on the wall and explain its meaning, he should be clothed in scarlet, and have a golden chain about his neck, and be the third ruler in the kingdom.

But Daniel knew that the kingdom of Bel-shaz'zar was soon to come to an end. He replied, "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to an-oth'er; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known unto him the in-ter-pre-ta'tion."

Then Daniel re-mind'ed the wicked Bel-shaz'zar how God had ex-alt'ed Neb-u-chad-nez'zar his father, and how, when Neb-u-chad-nez'zar's heart was lifted up, his glory was taken from him, "till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men."

"And thou his son, O Bel-shaz'zar," said Daniel, "hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy con'cu-bines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the

THE HAND'WRIT-ING ON THE WALL

God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glo'ri-fied: then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

"And this is the writing that was written, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, U-phar'sin.* This is the in-ter-pre-ta'tion of the thing:—

"MENE: *God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.*

"TEKEL: *Thou art weighed in the bal'an-ces, and art found wanting.*

"PERES: *Thy kingdom is di-vi'ded, and given to the Medes and Persians.*"

"Then com-mand'ed Bel-shaz'zar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proc-la-ma'tion con-cern'ing him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom."

The rest of the story of Bel-shaz'zar is told in few words:—

"In that night was Bel-shaz'zar the king of the Chal-de'ans slain. And Da-ri'us the Me'di-an took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."

Da-ri'us was the uncle of Cyrus, the com-mand'er of the armies of Persia. After this, the kingdom of Bab'y-lon was called Me-do-Per'sia.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Not long after Da-ri'us took the kingdom, he set over his realm one hundred twenty princes; over these were three pres'i-dents; and Daniel was set above them all; for "Daniel was preferred above the pres'i-dents and princes, because an ex'cel-lent spirit was in him." The king even thought to set Daniel over the whole realm.

THE KING SIGNING THE DECREE

The pres'i-dents and princes were angry when they saw how highly Daniel was honored by King Da-ri'us.

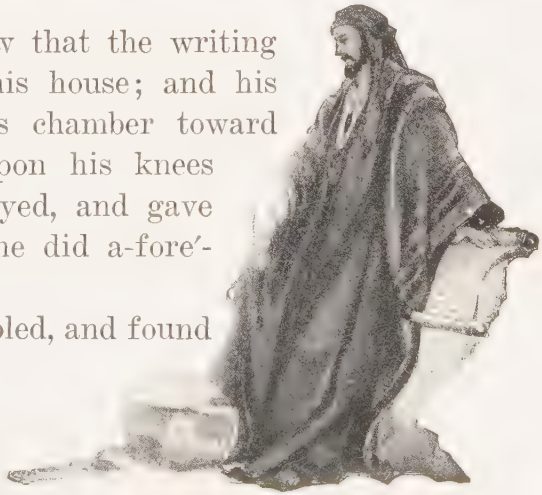
"Then the pres'i-dents and princes sought to find oc-ca'sion against Daniel con-cern'ing the kingdom; but they could find none oc-ca'sion nor fault; for-as-much' as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

"Then said these men, We shall not find any oc-ca'-sion against Daniel, except we find it against him con-cern'ing the law of his God.

"Then these pres'i-dents and princes as-sem'bled to-geth'er to the king, and said thus unto him, King Da-ri'us, live for-ev'er. All the pres'i-dents of the king-dom, the gov'ern-ors, and the princes, the coun'sel-ors, and the captains, have con-sult'ed to-geth'er to es-tab'-lish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that who-so-ev'er shall ask a pe-ti'tion of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

"Now, O king, es-tab'lish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, ac-cord'ing to the law of the Medes and Persians, which al'ter-eth not. Wherefore King Da-ri'us signed the writing and the decree.

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Je-ru'sa-lem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did a-fore'-time.



"Then these men as-sem'bled, and found

INTERNATIONAL

DANIEL PRAYING AS A PURITAN

Daniel praying and making sup-pli-ca'tion before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king con-cern'ing the king's decree: Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a pe-ti'tion of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?

"The king answered and said, The thing is true, ac-cord'ing to the law of the Medes and Persians, which al'ter-eth not.

"Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the cap-tiv'i-ty of Judah, re-gard'eth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his pe-ti'tion three times a day.

"Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to de-liv'er him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to de-liv'er him.

"Then these men as-sem'bled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king es-tab'lish-eth may be changed.

"Then the king com-mand'ed, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest con-tin'u-al-ly, he will de-liv'er thee.

"And a stone was brought,

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THE ANGEL PRO-TECT'ING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed con-cern'ing Daniel.

"Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were in'stru-ments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

"Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lam'en-ta-ble voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest con-tin'u-al-ly, able to de-liv'er thee from the lions?

"Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for-ev'er. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: for-as-much' as before him in'no-cen-cy was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

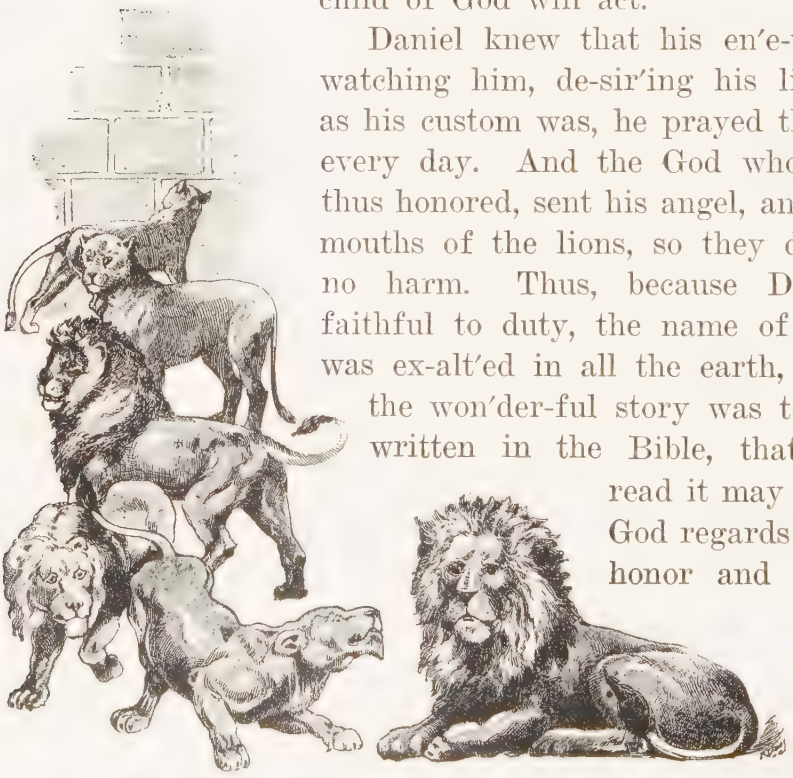
"Then was the king ex-ceed'ing glad for him, and com-mand'ed that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

"And the king com-mand'ed, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mas'ter-y of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

"Then King Da-ri'us wrote unto all people, nations, and lan'guag-es, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be mul'ti-plied unto you. I make a decree, That in every

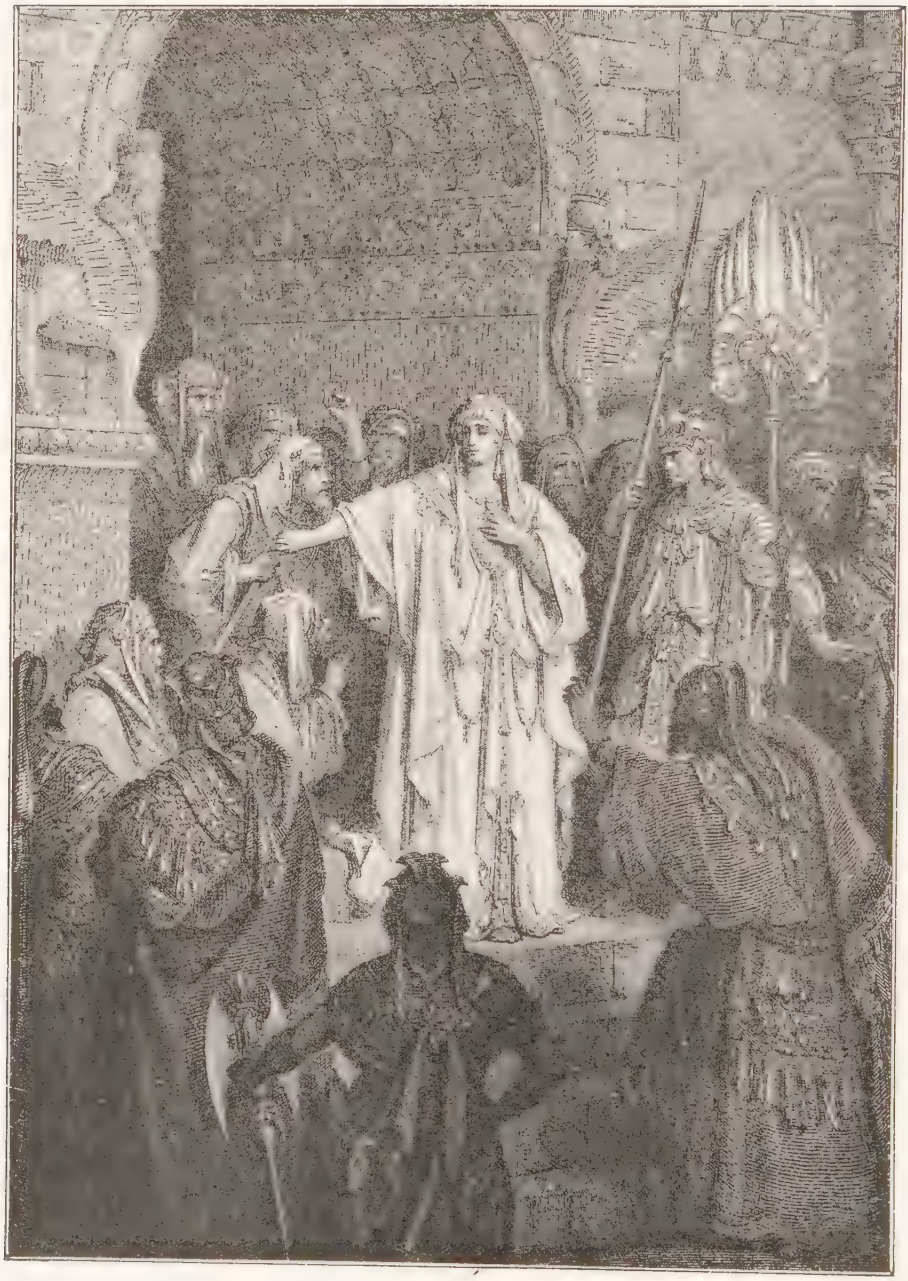
do-min'ion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for-ev'er, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his do-min'ion shall be even unto the end."

When the decree was made for-bid'ding any one to pray for thirty days, save to King Da-ri'us, Daniel might have thought, "I will not let any one see me pray. I will pray only in my heart. Then my life will be safe." Are there any children who would give this thought a place in their minds if such a decree was made to-day? Are there any who have even neglect'ed to pray when they were with other children who did not pray, and who might laugh at them? To every one who might be tempted to neglect the duty of prayer, Daniel's course is given as an ex-am'ple of how a true child of God will act.

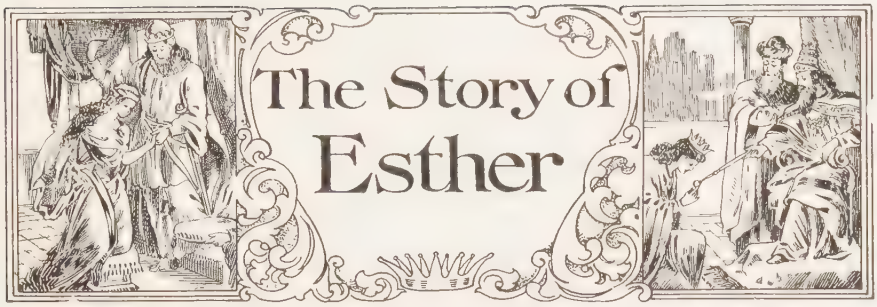


Daniel knew that his en'e-mies were watching him, de-sir'ing his life. Still, as his custom was, he prayed three times every day. And the God whom Daniel thus honored, sent his angel, and shut the mouths of the lions, so they did Daniel no harm. Thus, because Daniel was faithful to duty, the name of the Lord was ex-alt'ed in all the earth, as far as the won'der-ful story was told. It is written in the Bible, that all who read it may know how God regards those who honor and obey him.

Daniel lived and prospered during all the reign of Da-ri'us, and also during the reign of the next king, Cyrus the Persian. The Lord was with Daniel all these years, as well as in the reign of Neb-u-chad-nez'zar and Bel-shaz'zar. In visions and dreams, God showed him the things that would come to pass in the latter days. These are all written in the book of Daniel, and we should study them care'ful-ly, so we may know what the Lord will do in the earth before Jesus comes to set up his kingdom.



QUEEN VASHTI RE-FUS'ING TO OBEY THE COMMAND OF KING A-HAS-U-E'RUS



IN the days when the Jews were captives in the land of Me-do-Per'sia, there lived a rich and pow'er-ful king called A-has-u-e'rus. One time this king gave a great feast, which lasted one hundred eighty days. All the princes and nobles were in-vi'ted, and the king showed them all his riches and treasures.

Aft'er-ward the king made an-oth'er feast for the people who lived in Shushan the palace. This feast lasted seven days. It was held in the court of the palace, a very beau'ti-ful place. The hangings of the court were of white and green and blue, fastened with silver rings to the polished marble pillars. The beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of colored marble,—white and black and red and blue. All the cups from which the guests drank were of gold, and no two were alike.

On the seventh day, when the king had become drunken, he sent for Vashti the queen to come to the banquet, where all might see her "beauty; for she was fair to look on."

It was the custom in those days for women to wear a long veil, hiding their faces; and Vashti did not wish to appear before that com'pa-ny of drunken men with-

F. J. BARRIAS, ARTIST

ESTHER PRE-SENT'ING HERSELF BEFORE THE KING

out her veil. So when the king sent for her, she would not go.

A-has-u-e'rus was very angry because Vashti would not come at his command, and he said she should no longer be queen, but that an-oth'er should be chosen in her place.

Now there was living in Shushan a certain Jew named Mor'de-cai, who had been brought away captive from Je-ru'sa-lem. With him lived Esther, a beau'ti-ful young girl whose own father and mother were dead. Esther was the cousin of Mor'de-cai; but she was much younger than he, and he took her for his own daughter. Not only was Esther beau'ti-ful, but she was loving and o-be'di-ent.

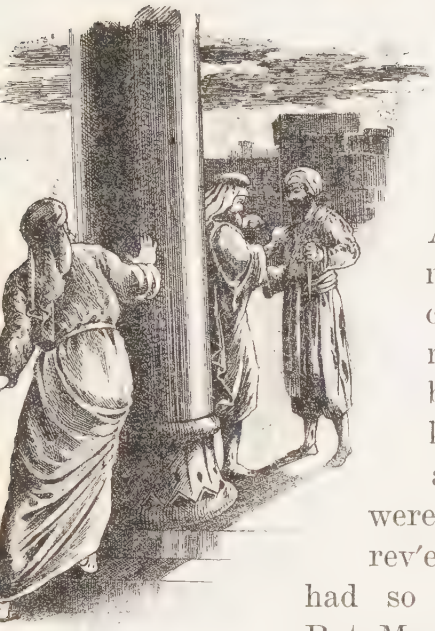
After Vashti was sent away, Esther was taken to the palace of the king. All who saw her loved her for her gentle ways. When the king saw Esther, he loved her, too, and set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Esther did not tell any one that she was a Jew; for Mor'de-cai had told her not to make it known.

Soon after Esther was made queen, Mor'de-cai, who was sitting in the gate of the palace, heard two of the king's servants planning how they could kill A-has-u-e'rus. Mor'de-cai told Esther, and the young queen told the king. Thus his life was saved. The story of the plot, and the name of Mor'de-cai, who sent a

MOR'DE-CAI RE-FUS'ING TO DO REV'ER-ENCE TO HAMAN

E. NORMAND, ARTIST



warning to the king, were written down in a book in which was kept a record of the his'to-ry of the kingdom.

After these things, King A-has-u-e'rus chose a noble whose name was Haman to be the chief man in his kingdom. Haman was above all the other nobles and princes, and next to the king himself in power. "And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and rev'er-enced Haman: for the king had so com-mand'ed con-cern'ing him. But Mor'de-cai bowed not, nor did him rev'er-ence. When Haman saw that Mor'de-cai bowed not, nor did him rev'er-ence," he was so angry that he wanted to kill not only Mor'de-cai, but all the Jews living in the kingdom. So Haman went to King A-has-u-e'rus, and said: There is a certain people in your kingdom who are dif'fer-ent from all other people. They do not keep your laws, and it is not wise to let them live. Therefore if it please the king, let them be destroyed, and I will pay into the king's treas'ur-ies ten thousand talents of silver.

So the king made a decree, and sent copies of it to every

THE PROC-LA-MA'TION OF HAMAN'S DECREE

part of his kingdom, saying that on a certain day all the Jews, young and old, even the women and the little children, should be slain.

"And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

"When Mor'de-cai perceived all that was done, Mor'de-cai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whith-er-so-ev'er the king's com-mand'ment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes."

Esther's servants told her that Mor'de-cai was clothed in sackcloth, and weeping in the streets. "Then was the queen ex-ceed'ing-ly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mor'de-cai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not." Then Esther called one of her trusted servants, Hatach, and sent him to ask Mor'de-cai what was the matter.

Mor'de-cai told Hatach about the decree that the king had made, and the money Haman had promised to pay as soon as all the Jews in the kingdom were put to death. Mor'de-cai also gave Hatach a copy of the king's decree, and sent word to Esther that she must ask the king to spare her people.

O. STEMLER, ARTIST

THE PROUD AND WICKED HAMAN

"And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mor'de-cai."

In her per-plex'i-ty, Queen Esther sent Hatach to Mor'de-cai with this message: "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's prov'in-ces, do know, that who-so-ev'er, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days."

When Mor'de-cai heard Esther's words, he sent this solemn message to the queen: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou al-to-geth'er holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there en-large'ment and de-liv'-er-ance arise to the Jews from an-oth'er place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

If Esther did not plead with the king to save her people, Mor'de-cai had faith to believe that God would de-liv'er them in some other way. But Esther would be punished if she valued her own life more than the lives of others.

When Esther heard these words, she sent Mor'de-cai this answer: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I

QUEEN ESTHER GOES IN BEFORE THE KING TO PLEAD FOR HER PEOPLE

also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not ac-cord'ing to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

"So Mor'de-cai went his way, and did ac-cord'ing to all that Esther had com-mand'ed him."

QUEEN ESTHER BEFORE THE KING

"Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal ap-par'el, and stood in the inner court of the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne.

"And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favor in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand.

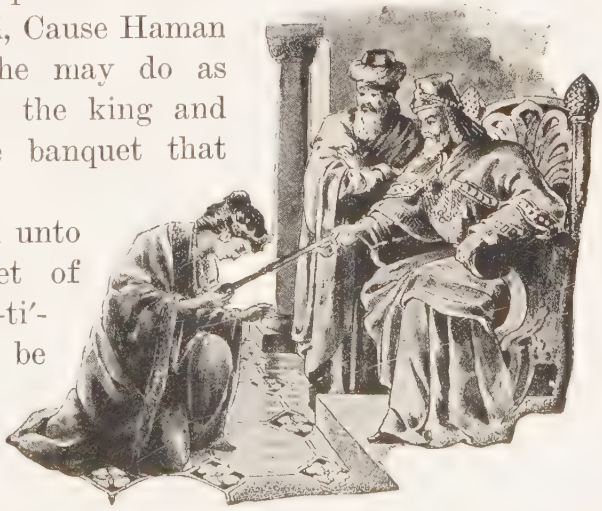
"So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter.

"Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

"And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

"Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

"And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy pe-ti'-tion? and it shall be



granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

"Then answered Esther, and said, My pe-ti'tion and my request is: If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my pe-ti'-tion, and to perform my request, let the king and Ha-man come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-mor'row as the king hath said.

"Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mor'de-cai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of in-dig-na'tion against Mor'de-cai. Nev-er-the-less' Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the mul'ti-tude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had pro-mo'ted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said more-o'ver, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-mor'row am I in-vi'ted unto her also with the king. Yet all this a-vail'eth me nothing, so long as I see Mor'de-cai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

"Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-mor'-row speak thou unto the king that Mor'de-cai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in mer'ri-ly with the king unto the banquet.

"And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

"On that night could not the king sleep, and he com-mand'ed to bring the book of records of the chron'i-cles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mor'de-cai had told of Big-tha'na and Teresh, two of the king's cham'ber-lains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king A-has-u-e'rus.

"And the king said, What honor and dig'ni-ty hath been done to Mor'de-cai for this?

"Then said the king's servants that min'is-tered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

"And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mor'de-cai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

"And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

"So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king de-light'eth to honor?

"Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself? And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king de-light'eth

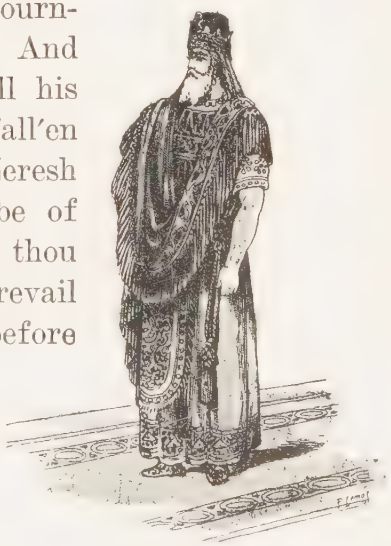
MOR′DE-CAI EX-ALT′ED

to honor, let the royal ap-par'el be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this ap-par'el and horse be de-liv'ered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king de-light'eth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king de-light'eth to honor.

"Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the ap-par'el and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mor'de-cai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

"Then took Haman the ap-par'el and the horse, and arrayed Mor'de-cai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king de-light'eth to honor.

"And Mor'de-cai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered. And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends eve'ry-thing that had be-fall'en him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mor'de-cai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.



"And while they were yet talk-

"THE AD'VER-SA-RY AND EN'E-MY IS THIS WICKED HAMAN"

ing with him, came the king's cham'ber-lains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

"So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy pe-ti'tion, Queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

"Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my pe-ti'tion, and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bond'wom-en, I had held my tongue, although the en'e-my could not coun-ter-vail' the king's damage.

"Then the king A-has-u-e'rus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

"And Esther said, The ad'ver-sa-ry and en'e-my is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen."

A-has-u-e'rus was very angry when he un-der-stood' what this man had planned to do, and he com-mand'ed that Haman should be hanged on the gallows that he had built for Mor'de-cai.

"On that day did the king A-has-u-e'rus give the house of Haman the Jews' en'e-my unto Esther the queen.

And Mor'de-cai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.

"And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mor'de-cai."

THE JEWS DELIVERED

Though the wicked Haman was dead, the plan that he had made would still have to be carried out; for it was a custom of the Medes and Persians that any law or decree or message which had been put in writing could not be changed, even by the king himself. So this message con-cern'ing the Jews, which had been sent in writing to every province and town and village, must still be performed.

Again Queen Esther came before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to save her people.

Though he could not change what he had written, A-has-u-e'rus told Esther and Mor'de-cai to write an-oth'er decree in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring, and send it to every part of his kingdom.

In this decree the king allowed the Jews to stand to-geth'er, and defend themselves from who-ev'er would try to harm them when the day ap-point'ed by the wicked Haman should come. The king's scribes, who could write in every language spoken in the kingdom, made copies of this letter; and these were quickly sent "by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young drom'e-da-ries," into all the countries where the other letter had been sent. And Mor'de-cai went out from the presence of the king in royal ap-par'el of blue and white,

and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

"And in every province, and in every city, whith-er-so-ev'er the king's com-mand'ment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them."

When the time came that the Jews would have been killed if the Lord had not de-liv'ered them by Queen Esther, God was with his captive people, and gave them vic'to-ry over their en'e-mies.

From that time the Jews had peace and honor. Queen Esther and Mor'-de-cai sent letters to all the Jews in the one hundred twen-ty-sev'en prov'-in-ces of the kingdom, asking them always to keep in re-mem'brance the days of this great de-liv'er-ance; "that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to an-oth'er, and gifts to the poor."

As for Mor'de-cai, he was great in the king's house, and his fame went out through-out all the prov'in-ces. "For Mor'-de-cai the Jew was next unto King A-has-u-e'rus, and great among the Jews."

ESTHER CROWNED QUEEN OF PERSIA, THAT SHE MIGHT DO A GREAT WORK FOR GOD

The Lord gave Esther her place upon the throne of Persia, that she might do a special work for him. If she had been filled with pride at the honors shown her, and the riches and beau'ti-ful things given her, she would have failed to do her part in saving her people. But Esther loved her fos-ter-fa'ther ten'der-ly; even when queen, her heart was touched when she heard that he was sad. In trying to comfort him, she learned of the danger that hung over the Jews, and what she must do to help them in this time of trouble.

Esther knew that God answers prayer; and before going into the presence of the king, she prayed that the Lord would be with her. Not only did she herself pray, but she asked all the Jews in Shushan to fast and pray with her for three days. We know that God heard and answered their prayers, as he always hears the cry of his children. "Call upon me in the day of trouble," he says; "I will de-liv'er thee." Not only in times of great danger and sorrow may we call upon our heav'en-ly Father to help us, but we may bring to him all the little troubles, and the temp-ta'tions and sorrows that come to us day by day; for we know that he has help for every time of need.

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O. STEMLER, ARTIST

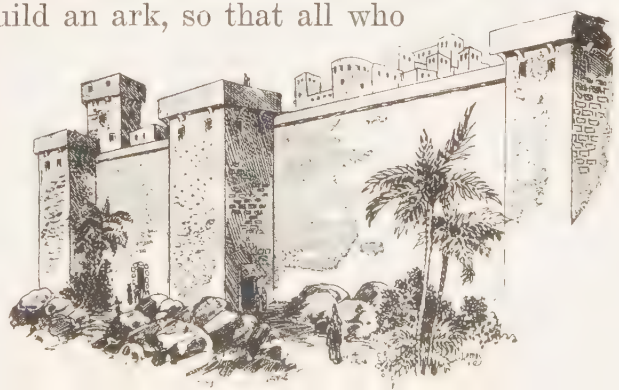
JONAH PAYING HIS FARE WHEN TRYING TO RUN AWAY FROM GOD'S CALL
TO WARN NINEVEH

The Story of Jonah

ON the east and north of the land of Canaan lay the country of Mes-o-po-ta′mi-a. It was in Mes-o-po-ta′mi-a, you re-mem′ber, that Re-bek′ah, the wife of Isaac, lived as a child and young girl. Here, too, Rachel, the mother of Joseph, spent her girlhood. Nin′e-veh was the chief city of Mes-o-po-ta′mi-a. It was built on the banks of the river Tigris, and had high walls and strong gates. It was a very old city, even in the days of A′bra-ham.

The people of Nin′e-veh worshiped idols, and were very wicked. At last their sin became so great that the Lord de-ci′ded to destroy their city.

We have read how at one time the people of the earth became so wicked that God was grieved "at his heart;" and he said, "I will destroy man whom I have cre-a′ted." But before he brought the flood upon the earth, he chose Noah, to warn men that the flood would surely come, and to build an ark, so that all who would believe his message, and repent of their evil ways, might enter it, and be saved. Again, be-



fore he destroyed the wicked cities of Sodom and Go-mor'rah by fire, he sent two angels, in the form of men, to warn Lot and his family, and to urge them to escape.

So with Nin'e-veh. God would not destroy this wicked city without sending a warning to the people, and giving them an op-por-tu'ni-ty to turn to him. Jonah was the prophet chosen by the Lord to carry his solemn message to this great city.

We do not know much about Jonah, but we suppose he lived in the days when E-li'sha was the leading prophet in Is'ra-el. He seems to have been a very dif'-fer-ent man, how-ev'er, from that brave and fearless servant of the Lord, who was always ready to obey God's call.

We will read the story of Jonah and his visit to Nin'e-veh, just as it is told in the Bible: —

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of A-mit'tai, saying, Arise, go to Nin'e-veh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wick'ed-ness is come up before me.

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

"But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

"Then the mar'i-ners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and

he lay, and was fast asleep. So the ship'mas-ter came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

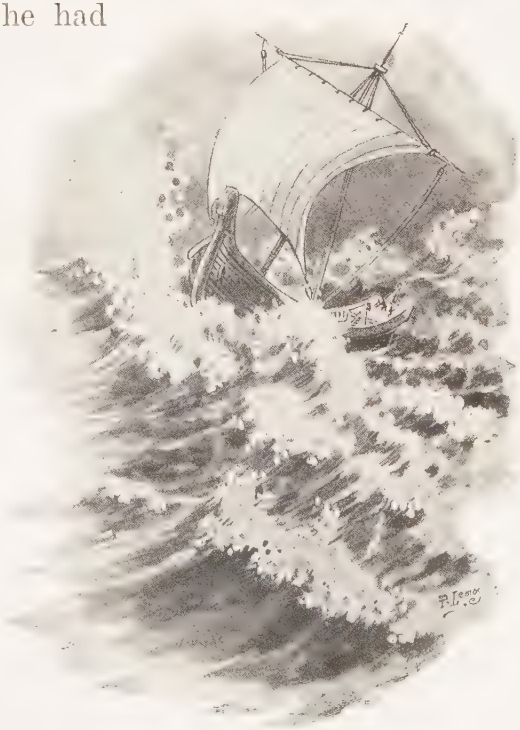
"And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

"Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us. What is thine oc-cu-pa'tion? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?

"And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men ex-ceed'-ing-ly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tem-pest'u-ous.

"And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.



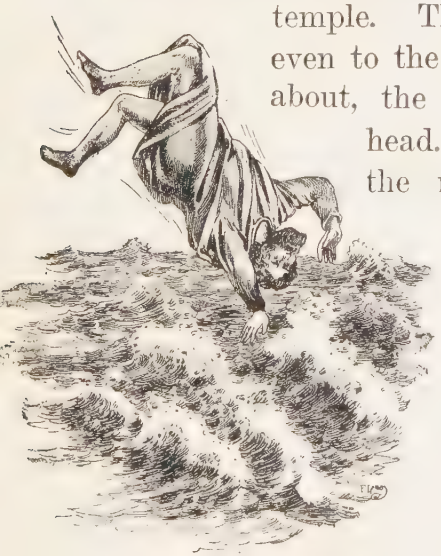
JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA

"Nev-er-the-less' the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tem-pest'u-ous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us in'no-cent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.

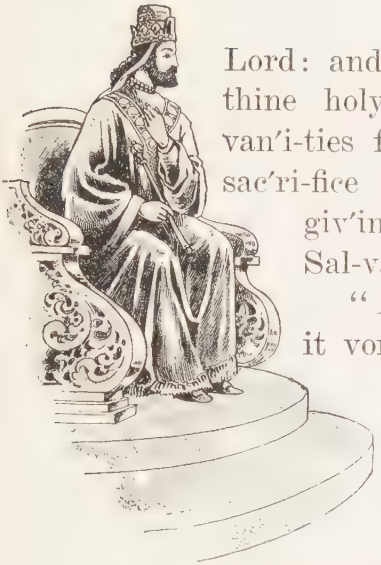
"So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord ex-ceed'ing-ly, and offered a sac'ri-fice unto the Lord, and made vows.

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

"Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said: I cried by reason of mine af-flic'tion unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for-ev'er: yet hast thou brought up my life from cor-rup'tion, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I re-mem'bered the



JONAH PREACHING THE WARNING MESSAGE TO NINEVEH



Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying van'i-ties forsake their own mercy. But I will sac'ri-fice unto thee with the voice of thanks-giv'ing; I will pay that that I have vowed. Sal-va'tion is of the Lord.

"And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vom'it-ed out Jonah upon the dry land.

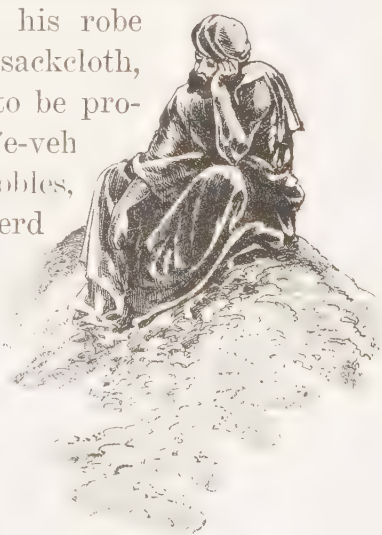
"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nin'e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

"So Jonah arose, and went unto Nin'e-veh, ac-cord'-ing to the word of the Lord. Now Nin'e-veh was an ex-ceed'ing great city of three days' journey.

"And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'e-veh shall be o-ver-thrown'.

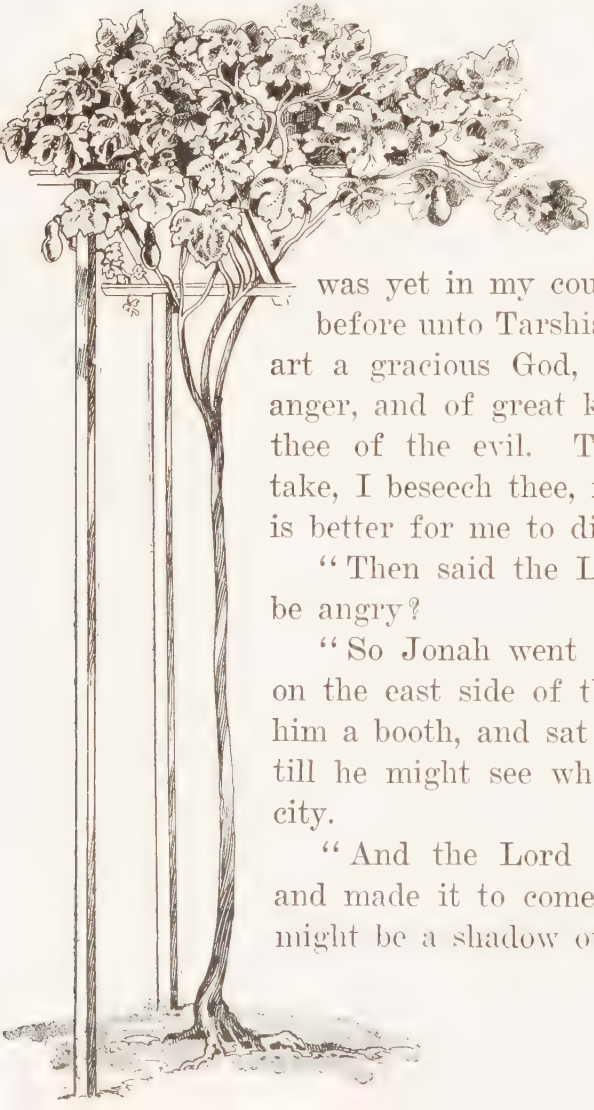
"So the people of Nin'e-veh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

"For word came unto the king of Nin'e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nin'e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste an'y-thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with



sackcloth, and cry might'i-ly unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the vi'o-lence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God re-pent'ed of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. But it displeased Jonah ex-ceed'ing-ly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and mer'ci-ful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and re-pent'est thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.



"Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry?

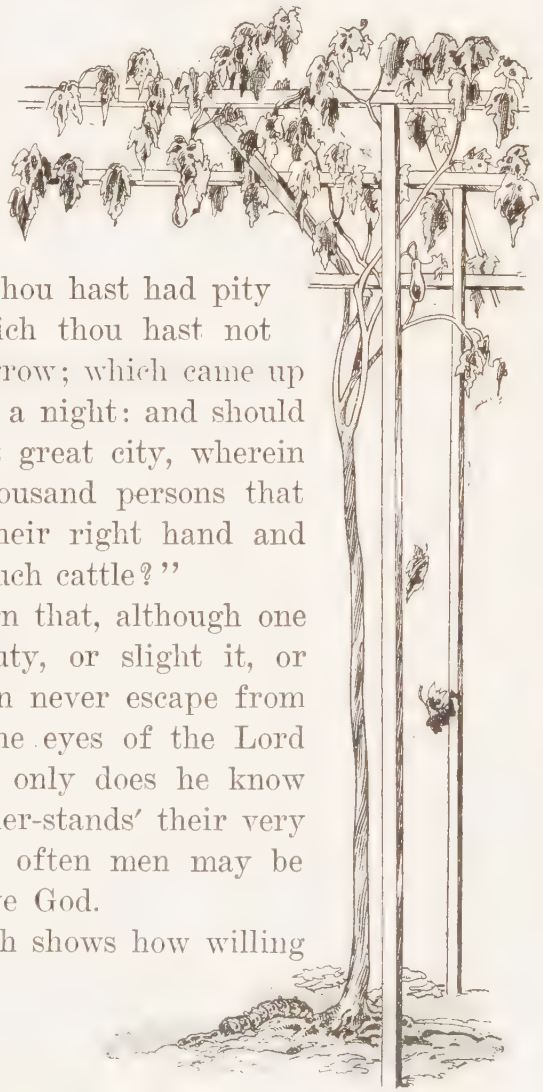
"So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

"And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to de-liv'er

him from his grief. So Jonah was ex-ceed'ing glad of the gourd.

"But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

"And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a ve'he-ment east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and saith, It is better for me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.



"Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nin'e-veh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that can not discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

From this story we learn that, although one may run away from a duty, or slight it, or shirk it al-to-geth'er, he can never escape from the presence of God. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place." Not only does he know where men are, but he un-der-stands' their very thoughts. No matter how often men may be deceived, no one can deceive God.

God's mercy to Nin'e-veh shows how willing

he is to forgive those who confess their sins and put them away. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," for he delights to show mercy and love to his children.

All God's warnings are sent in love; for it is his desire that all should be saved. He is "not willing that any should perish." With deepest love he calls to all who are in the ways that lead to e-ter'nal death, "Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?"

Our loving Father in heaven will receive all who do turn to him. His Word is full of prom'is-es to those who seek him. "I will heal their back-sli'ding," he says; "I will love them freely." And again, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Should we not gladly obey and serve such a loving, gracious heav'en-ly Father?